

Chronicles

August 2006

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

\$3.95



WE ARE ALL
SOCIALISTS
NOW

PERIODICAL
#BXBFHFJ*****AUTO**ALL FOR ADC 941
#94301UZZ555BY003# OCT 08 TURE 5547
RON UNZ S 132 418
555 BRYANT ST # 371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

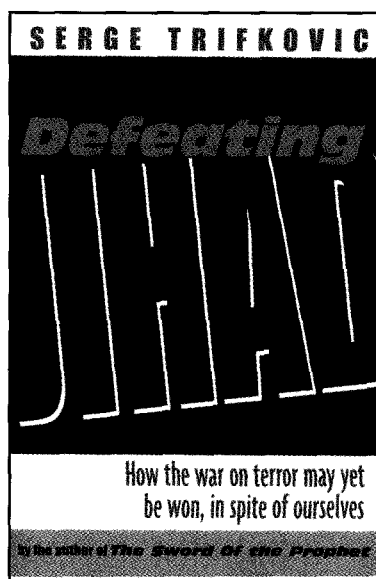
New from the author of *The Sword of the Prophet*

"The victory will come not by conquering Mecca for America but by disengaging America from Mecca and by excluding Mecca from America. Eliminating the risk is impossible. Managing it wisely, resolutely, and permanently is something attainable."

Defeating Jihad

by Srdja Trifkovic

How the War on Terror May Yet Be Won, In Spite of Ourselves



"Trifkovic outlines a comprehensive new strategy to defend the West against an enemy that increasingly threatens us from within. The first step . . . is to stop misidentifying the struggle we are in as a 'War on Terrorism'—a phrase that confuses the enemy's preferred technique (terrorism) with the enemy himself (resurgent Islam). Islamic terrorism—that used by Muslims in pursuit of objectives inspired by Islamic teaching, tradition and historical practice—is a global phenomenon requiring a coordinated global response. Yet Trifkovic . . . argues against more military interventions abroad in favor of measures designed to keep us safe at home."

—Jeffrey Rubin, editor, Conservative Book Club

Defeating Jihad Order Form

(please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

DEFE

Softcover Price \$27.95
(\$22.95 + \$5.00 shipping and handling each)

X Quantity _____

Total _____

Please mail form (with payment) to:
Chronicles/Products
P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054

or, to order toll-free,
call 1-800-397-8160

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____



Check or money order enclosed



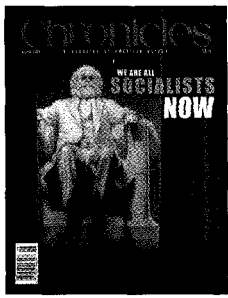
Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

DEFE



Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

PERSPECTIVE

Socialism Is Theft
by Thomas Fleming

10

The thievery we know and love.

VIEWS

The Natural History of the Night Watchman State
by Donald W. Livingston
A culture of autonomy.

14

Thoughts on Socialism
by John Lukacs
The failure of Economic Man.

17

The Idea of Socialism
by Claude Polin
A heresy and its legacy.

19

Marx's and Engels' Illegitimate Offspring
by David A. Hartman
A nation of welfare babies.

25

NEWS

Russia's Demographic Crisis
by Wayne Allensworth
What Putin didn't say.

28

America's Other War
by Ted Galen Carpenter
The deteriorating situation in Afghanistan.

30

REVIEWS

Right Deserves Might
by Daniel McCarthy

33

James R. Holmes: *Theodore Roosevelt and World Order*

Patricia O'Toole: *When Trumpets Call: Theodore Roosevelt After the White House*

Jack Trotter on Kevin Phillips' *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* ♦ Srdja Trifkovic on Stephen Glain's *Mullahs, Merchants and Militants: The Economic Collapse of the Arab World* ♦ James Vogel on Philip Jenkins' *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* ♦ Clark Stooksbury on Lynn Vincent's and Robert Stacy McCain's *Donkey Cons: Sex, Crime and Corruption in the Democratic Party* ♦

36

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Zimbabwe: The Meaning of Racism
by Edward Dutton

44

Letter From Hvar: Withstanding the Fire
by Mary Kohler

45

VITAL SIGNS

THE SERVILE STATE: Why I Am Not a Socialist
by G.K. Chesterton

50

COMMONWEAL: Death and Life of a Great Urban Thinker by Steven Greenhut

52

IMMIGRATION: A Liberal Policy
by Joe Prussing

53

COLUMNS

SINS OF OMISSION by Roger D. McGrath

13

LETTER TO THE BISHOP by Joe Ecclesia

41

THE ROCKFORD FILES by Scott P. Richert

43

EUROPEAN DIARY by Andrei Navrozov

47

THE AMERICAN INTEREST by Srdja Trifkovic

48

IN THE DARK by George McCartney
The Da Vinci Code

54

THE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

56

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

4

AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

6

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

7

POETRY

Alone in the Highlands and

12

At Culloden Field by Peter Hunt

27

ON THE COVER

Cover by George McCartney, Jr. Inside illustrations by Melanie Anderson and Nicholas Garrie.

AUGUST 2006 / 3

EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

INTERIOR ARTIST
George McCartney, Jr.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, George Garrett,
Tom Landess, Joseph Sobran,
James O. Tate, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Wayne Allensworth, Donald Livingston,
Roger D. McGrath, William Mills,
William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov,
Claude Polin

FILM EDITOR
George McCartney

FOREIGN-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

Copyright © 2006 by The Rockford Institute.
All rights reserved.

Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for \$39.99 (foreign subscriptions add \$12 for surface delivery, \$48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 30, No. 8 August 2006
Printed in the United States of America

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Stopping the Flow

Having read Steven Greenhut's editorial in the June issue (*American Proscenium*), I must ask: Why is Mr. Greenhut not against *all* immigration? In order to be consistent with the general tenor of his article, he should be totally against any kind of immigration right now, as am I. I often hear people say that they are for *legal* immigration, as if to say, "Hey! I am really a nice guy, even if I haven't thought the whole thing through." How is assimilation ever going to be accomplished if immigration is not ground to a screeching halt at once? America had a big influx of immigrants around the start of the 20th century, stopped it pretty much until after World War I, took in some more, and then halted it for about 60 years, while everyone became good Americans.

By the way, we are *not* a nation of immigrants, which is the big lie that our leaders keep telling us, but we are colonizers, settling a huge and wild country. Probably 85 or 90 percent of Americans were born here, so there are not really that many immigrants, compared with the general population. That base canard should stop being promulgated.

—Peter Meis
Tucson, Arizona

Mr. Greenhut Replies:

Mr. Meis does exactly what the La Raza crowd does: completely blur the distinction between legal and illegal immigration, as if it makes no difference whether someone came here by sneaking in from Tijuana in the trunk of a Toyota or went through the long process of waiting in line and getting a green card. To open borders supporters, an immigrant is an immigrant and should be welcome here with all the rights of citizenship. To Mr. Meis and others like him, an immigrant is an immigrant and should be kept out of the country, period.

I don't think immigration has to be an all-or-nothing affair. If half of Alberta moved to the United States tomorrow, I doubt many people would even notice or care. My neighborhood of perfectly assimilated, American-flag-waving, Eng-

lish-speaking immigrants functions exactly like my nonimmigrant neighborhood functioned in Ohio.

The problem is not immigration *per se* but the lawlessness that comes from illegal immigration and the burden mass immigration of poor people places on the culture and the social-service system.

On Missing the Boat

While it was gratifying to see you take note of George Packer's important book *The Assassins' Gate*, Ivan Eland's tepid review (May) gives only grudging praise to perhaps the most incisive reportage so far of our involvement in Iraq.

Packer's book is not, as Eland suggests, merely an exposé of the Bush administration's incompetence. It is a careful, comprehensive panorama of the perverse human chemistry created by any misguided, isolated bureaucracy seeking empire and plunder in a foreign land under a banner of lofty ideals. It also documents, by detailed reporting, the bunker-like, group-think mentality of the architects of the continuing delusional "regime change" efforts aimed at Israel's remaining adjacent enemies.

Essentially unacknowledged by Dr. Eland, however, is Packer's singular skill in placing so much "red meat" reporting in a dramatic perspective readers can easily grasp and enjoy.

Packer records several revealing quotations from the War Party's leadership. Take, for example, the reaction of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to Baghdad's rising chaos in 2003: "Stuff happens." Or President Bush's aside to departing CPA nation-rebuilder Jay Garner a scant two months after the night of "shock and awe": "You want to do Iran for the next one?" Or CPA officials in Baghdad carping about incessant "long-range tinkering" from Washington bureaucrats wielding "the 8,000-mile screwdriver." Or Caspar Weinberger's testimony before Congress in 2002 that "even chaos would be better than Saddam." Or Kanan Makiya, an idealistic Chalabi exile counterpart, boasting proudly in the run-up to the war: "We have the support of those arch-warmongers Paul Wolfowitz, Secretary Rumsfeld, and the vice president's

office,” with Packer adding that war “fever induced a surge of testosterone in life-long noncombatants who had suddenly discovered their inner Churchill.”

Packer notes that, in mid-2005, Vice President Cheney announced, as he had “a year and a half before,” that the insurgency was in its “last throes.” And Douglas Feith, a Perle/Wolfowitz creature, declared, when leaving his post at the Pentagon, “that the Bush administration had never wanted to impose American values in Iraq . . .”

Packer steps out of his role as reporter only to draw an historian’s logical conclusions from what he hears, sees, and feels. And he is as absorbent gathering opinion in Iraqi houses and on Iraqi streets as he is in Baghdad’s CPA headquarters. Eland writes as if Packer is slightly less than believable, making use of such words and phrases as “[Packer] implies,” “claims,” “notes,” “according to Packer.” These snuffy locutions belittle the scrutiny Packer focuses on what’s really happening. “Packer holds Bremer responsible for many bad decisions,” opines Eland, yet the author’s extensive portrait of Bremer, his background (manager of Henry Kissinger’s consultancy), and his cronies (especially law-school buddy Michael Mobbs, who starts handing out the billions) demonstrates the terrible hubris of Bremer’s fatal decisions. “When Bremer arrived,” notes one returned Iraqi exile mordantly, “the electricity was eighteen hours a day. Then it started going down.”

Packer’s book would be invaluable for just two chapters, “Special Plans” and “Exiles,” which catalogue the cronyism so emblematic of the neocon network disseminating misinformation in think tanks, academe, government, and media—much of it “stovepiped” to the Oval office from Richard Perle’s Office of Special Plans, which is run by Feith and Cheney protégé William Luti. Packer impressively documents the ideological and ethnic roots of the Iraq debacle, which has duped a nation.

In an Epilogue, Packer clearly states where he stands: “I came to believe that those in positions of highest responsibility for Iraq showed a carelessness about human life that amounted to criminal negligence. Swaddled in abstract ideas, convinced of their own righteousness, incapable of self criticism, indifferent to accountability, they turned a difficult undertaking into a needlessly deadly one. When things went wrong, they found

other people to blame. The Iraq war was always winnable; it still is. For this very reason, the recklessness of its authors is all the harder to forgive.”

Agree or disagree, this is the book to read to find out where the bodies are buried and why the closets are crammed with skeletons. Judging from Dr. Eland’s review, you’d hardly know that.

—S.K. Oberbeck
Sanibel, FL

Dr. Eland Replies:

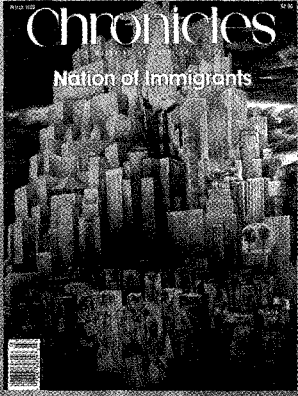
S.K. Oberbeck deems my review “tepid” and accuses me of giving only “grudging praise” to Packer. Yet the first sentence of the review reads, “George Packer’s *The Assassins’ Gate: America in Iraq* aptly exposes the incompetence of the Bush administration’s occupation of Iraq.”

Oberbeck also makes another accusation: “Essentially unacknowledged by Dr. Eland, however, is Packer’s singular skill in placing so much ‘red meat’ reporting in a dramatic perspective readers can easily grasp and enjoy.” Yet in the second and third sentences of the review, I clear-

ly state that “[Packer] has traveled to Iraq many times to talk to leading Iraqis, their not-so-prominent fellow citizens, and U.S. policymakers. The book makes for interesting reading partly because Packer uses the experiences of ordinary Iraqis to illustrate the ineptitude of the Bush administration’s Iraq policy.”

“Red meat” is what Mr. Oberbeck wanted, but apparently he did not get enough to satisfy his Bush-hating salivation. Mr. Oberbeck’s letter indicts the Bush administration for “seeking empire and plunder in a foreign land,” refers to the Republican Party as the “War Party,” and accuses Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld of being “arch-warmongers.” Such turbocharged rhetoric resembles that used by Marxists and should not be used in a serious analysis of any topic.

My review of Packer’s book was largely favorable. If I wasn’t jumping up and down in my praise of the book (and I did praise it), the rest of the first paragraph of the review speaks to my concern: “[The book] falters in implying that a more competent administration could have been more successful in the Herculean task of restructuring an entire society’s political, economic, and social system.”



**Defending the Homeland:
America's Immigration Crisis**

Two decades ago, *Chronicles* sounded the alarm over immigration. Pundits and policy experts who vilified us at the time have at last admitted that there is a crisis. If you want to learn the extent of the crisis and what must be done from the people who were there first, join:

Rockford Institute Board Chairman David Hartman,
Chronicles editors Thomas Fleming and Chilton Williamson, Jr.,
and special guests
Peter Brimelow, Senator John Cornyn (R-TX),
and
The Honorable James Bissett,
former head of Canada's Immigration Service

for a one-day conference on Capitol Hill

Mid-September

For details, call (815) 964-5811 or visit www.chroniclesmagazine.org

After Zaqawi: The New Thirty Years' War

When the U.S. government toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003, it thought regime change would help bring democracy to Iraq, and then to the rest of the region. President Bush and his aides based their expectations on the premise that politics in the Middle East revolves around the relationship between individuals and the state, as it does in the West, and failed to recognize that, in that part of the world, people see politics as the balance of power among communities, as Vali Nasr, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, writes in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*.

Indeed, rather than viewing the fall of Saddam as an occasion to create a liberal democracy, most Iraqis saw it as an opportunity to redress injustices in the distribution of power among the country's major ethnic and religious groups.

Hence, while Bush-administration officials were celebrating the killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the head of Al Qaeda in Iraq, and spinning it as another "turning point" in the "War on Terror," the elimination of Zarqawi was seen in Iraq as another victory for the Shiites and their current Kurdish allies as they try to contain an insurgency led by various Sunni groups, such as former members of the Ba'ath regime and Islamist guerrillas, including foreign recruits such as the Jordanian Zarqawi (and, apparently, his Egyptian successor). In fact, some analysts have speculated that Zarqawi was betrayed by rival Sunni insurgents.

To put it differently, what is needed now more than ever is something akin to an epistemological change in the way we interpret the developments taking place in Iraq and in other parts of the Middle East. The Bush administration's conception of a grand struggle between the Forces of Light (secular, liberal, pro-American democrats) and the Forces of Darkness (radical anti-Western and anti-American "Islamofascists") should be replaced with a new paradigm that accentuates the balance of power among tribal, ethnic, and religious communities whose main commitment is not to advance pro- or anti-Western values but to their own self-interests. Such interests could, depending on the circumstances, coincide with or run against American interests.

In that context, much of what has happened in the Middle East since the U.S. invasion of Iraq has been a shift of power from the Sunni minority to the Shiite majority—and, more specifically, to Shiite politicians and clerics with strong ties to the clerics who rule Iran. Indeed, the evolving demographic, cultural, economic, and military ties between the two countries are likely to turn Iraq into a satellite of Iran in the coming years.

Moreover, the Shiite-Sunni war in Iraq could spill over into other countries in the Middle East where Shiite communities, having been treated for years as second-class citizens by the ruling Sunni elites, see the Shiite revival in Iraq as a model to emulate. In Bahrain, Shiites make up 75 percent of the population; in Saudi Arabia, they reside in the oil-rich area of the country; and, in Lebanon, the Shiites are now about 45 percent of the population and control the powerful Hezbollah militia.

The Arab-Sunni leaders of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan have been terrified by the rising political power of the Shiites in the region, who seem bent on challenging the old order. King Abdullah of Jordan has even warned of a new "Shiite crescent" stretching from Lebanon to Iran. The Saudis believe that the collapse of Hussein, the Sunni strongman, has opened the door for a Shiite Iraq to emerge as the leading power in the Middle East and have warned the Americans that, unless Washington does something to counter Iran's power, they will have no choice but to appease and cut deals with Tehran (which is exactly what Syria's Bashar al Assad is doing these days).

At the same time, the success of Zarqawi's group in Iraq is just another sign of the growing power of radical Islamic groups that are challenging the existing military dictators (Egypt, Syria) and royal families (Saudi Arabia, Jordan) and that range from the more "moderate" wings of the Muslim Brotherhood, including Hamas, to the more extremist groups allied with Al Qaeda. If and when these groups come to power, one could expect them to assert their political and military power, not only against the United States but first and foremost as a way of rallying

their Sunni coreligionists against the perceived Shiite threat.

"The Middle East that will emerge from the crucible of the Iraq war may not be more democratic, but it will be definitely more Shiite—and perhaps more fractious," warns Nasr, who does not exclude the possibility that the Sunni-Shiite struggle for power in the Middle East could end up devastating the current political *status quo*. He believes that one way the United States could help prevent such a scenario is by working together with Tehran to establish order in Iraq. A worst-case scenario that could follow a U.S.-Iran military confrontation would be the secession of the large Sunni and Kurdish minorities from Iran. At the same time, the growing power of radical Sunni groups, such as Al Qaeda, in Iraq, could create a mini "Talibistan" in the Sunni areas of Iraq that would try to export their ideology and military aid to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The end result could be a series of civil and regional wars involving all the major players in the region as well as outside powers, reshaping the map of the Middle East.

Sounds familiar? The Thirty Years' War was, from the outset, a religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics and grew out of the territory of what is now Germany. It ended with the Treaty of Westphalia, which gave birth to the modern European state system.

To help prevent a Middle Eastern version of the Thirty Years' War, the United States would do well not to promote any further "regime change" or continue "spreading democracy" in the region—actions that have helped to bring to power the Shiites in Iraq and Hamas in Palestine. A wise and realistic administration in Washington would try to work with the existing powers in the region, including Tehran, to preserve the *status quo* while promoting gradual liberalization, mostly in the economic arena.

Perhaps it is too late to close Pandora's box in Iraq and Palestine, and all that remains for us is to control the damage done by our "Iraqization" of the Middle East. If so, Zarqawi and his group will probably end up a small footnote in this chapter of history. ©

THE HOLY LAND's long, hot summer started with a spate of rocket attacks by Palestinian militants based in Gaza on the Israeli border town of Sderot. Over 100 homemade *Kasems* had been fired by the last week of June, resulting in civilian casualties and calls for the return of Israeli troops to the Gaza Strip—a mere ten months after it was evacuated by former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Israel responded with a series of “targeted killings” of militants in Gaza, but the air strikes also took their usual toll in civilian lives and prompted international protests.

Then, on June 25, the military wing of Hamas—the ruling party in the Palestinian Authority (PA)—launched an attack on a military outpost at the Israeli town of Kerem Shalom, just south of the Gaza Strip. The militiamen killed two soldiers and abducted one, demanding the release of all Palestinian women and teenagers in Israeli jails in return for his freedom. The following day, an 18-year-old Jewish settler was kidnapped and killed in the West Bank. The Israeli response came two days later. In the course of a simultaneous military incursion into Gaza and the West Bank, dozens of prominent Hamas members were arrested, including several PA government ministers and members of the National Assembly.

The political and financial crisis within the Palestinian Authority has been brewing ever since the landslide victory of Hamas, a fundamentalist Islamic movement officially dedicated to the destruction of Israel, in the general election last January. The refusal of Hamas to change its position on “the Zionist entity” prompted the United States and the European Union to impose crippling financial sanctions on the PA and brought the already moribund “peace process” to a complete standstill. The crisis also led to rising tensions and even open fighting between Hamas’s militia and the PA security forces. The latter, nominally 70,000 strong, are controlled by the late Yasser Arafat’s Fatah party and are presumably loyal to the beleaguered PA president, Mahmoud Abbas, but that relationship has been weakened by Abbas’s indecisiveness and by the fact that the troops are not being paid. The attack at Kerem Shalom was a challenge to Israel, but it also sent a clear message to Fatah that it has lost control and has no means to stop other factions from acting as they see fit.

Abbas still favors the two-state solution, which means a *de facto* recognition of Israel, and fears that the posture of Hamas is detrimental to Palestinian interests because it plays into the hands of Israeli hard-liners who deny that any long-term deal with the Palestinians is possible. In a bold gamble that smacked of desperation, Abbas, last May, called for a referendum to decide the issue. His initiative was immediately rejected by Hamas, which claimed that he was causing further divisions within Palestinian ranks. It also caused nervousness among his own supporters, who feared that, if the referendum were held under present circumstances, most Palestinians would support the hard-liners. A compromise formula was drafted by several prominent Palestinian activists held in Israeli jails, but the vagueness of its wording appeared calculated to paper over the internal Palestinian differences rather than resolve them.

The Israeli-military action may provide a temporary resolution by rekindling the sense of Palestinian unity in the face of adversity, but here, too, there is less than meets the eye. Pro-Fatah Palestinians will not say so openly, but they are well aware that the Israeli arrests are a crippling blow to Hamas that will diminish its ability to exercise influence in the Palestinian Authority. The scales are at least potentially tipped back in Fatah’s favor, but if so, the beneficiaries are sure to be reluctant to gloat.

The ability of Abbas to reinforce his own position in the aftermath of Israeli action is open to doubt. He was ridiculed by the Palestinian public for hugging Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert at the Petra summit in Jordan on June 22, while the Israeli air force was continuing its “targeted killings” in Gaza. Israel’s subsequent announcement that she has agreed to transfer Jordanian-supplied arms to Abbas’s Presidential Guards also raised questions about Israeli purposes: Against whom, exactly, was Abbas expected to use his newly acquired firepower? His inability to secure the release of the abducted Israeli soldier in Gaza through the political pressure of his friends in Cairo and Amman, coupled with his unwillingness to unleash open warfare against pro-Hamas militants (because that could escalate into a civil war), shows the extent to which Abbas is caught between a rock

and a hard place.

The return of Israeli forces to Gaza cast doubt upon Prime Minister Olmert’s controversial plan to complete a similar withdrawal from large parts of the West Bank later this year. That plan would leave 90 percent of the West Bank to the PA, redraw the border close to the Green Line and along the antiterror fence, and relocate some 70,000 Jewish settlers who currently reside east of Israel’s pre-1967 border. Olmert’s claim that this “realignment” would improve Israel’s security and reduce tensions with the Palestinians is now ridiculed by his opponents on the right. They say that no further withdrawal should be contemplated as long as the PA is beset by anarchy and dominated by men of violence.

It is unlikely that Olmert can devise a plan to prop up Abbas, declaw Hamas, continue disengagement from the territories, and maintain the unity of his government coalition. His former aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, have explained to me that, in his instincts as well as in his *modus operandi*, he is a politician who will do whatever is necessary in the short term to maintain his position, regardless of the big picture. He will seek to please as many domestic constituencies as possible, but the net effect will not amount to a strategic vision for the future of the region.

The “Oslo Process,” as conceived by those who initiated it, has come to an end. This is a diagnosis, not an opinion. The political principle of Oslo was an ongoing trade-off of various items in bilateral negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians working jointly toward a final, permanent peace agreement. In the summer of 2006, this principle has broken down completely. Amid the rising spiral of violence, there can be no negotiations on final status, or even on interim agreements, and there is no cooperation and coordination on security-related issues. The process has collapsed, and each party has chosen to go its own way. The Palestinian Authority is sinking into anarchy; Israel is taking unilateral *ad hoc* steps; and neither side has a strategic vision or a workable long-term plan. The outside world, including the United States, is less interested in mediating than at any time since the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991.

The tragedy of the Israeli-Arab conflict is that a problem that may have been

amenable, a few decades ago, to the conventional conflict-resolution approach has morphed into a civilizational and religious dispute beyond politics. Most of the principal actors perceive it as a zero-sum game, and, in the Middle East, perception is still the only reality.

—Srdja Trifkovic

READING OBITUARIES is part of reading the newspaper and can be oddly rewarding. It's instructive and even inspiring to read about lives and careers. Sometimes, we read about strangers, sometimes celebrities, sometimes even people we know—or knew. The gravity of the occasion requires a formulaic response: Without considering the matter, we all know how an obituary is supposed to be composed.

We must therefore notice when we see an obituary that is not formulaic, and wonder why. I was saddened to read of the passing of Grady McWhiney, the noted Southern historian and academic who was 77 when he died in Abilene, Texas, on April 18. His obituary appeared in the *New York Times* on May 1, and it is upon the obituary and not upon the man and the career that I wish to reflect. I derive all that I know about the late Grady McWhiney from what was implied in two books of his that I read, and what I recall of a couple of hours I once spent with that humorous, thoughtful, and polite man.

He was a gentleman and a scholar, though that can hardly be derived from the bizarre obituary in the *Times*. There we read of "bourbon," "endless analyses of the Civil War," "drinking," and then of "the League of the South, which the Southern Poverty Law Center called a hate group." Dr. McWhiney's "Celtic thesis" must be ridiculed because it touches upon an obsession of American politics and power: The South is contemptible because so much politics and power is served by that contempt. Dr. McWhiney's professional work, attempting to explain Southern identity and distinctiveness, must therefore be discredited even in his obituary, thereby blighting the occasion. Did an expired professor deserve this?

The League of the South is, of course, not a hate group—*hate group* being the latest term for "Southern group." The League of the South could more accurately be described as a love group. If a hate group is hateful, then the odious Southern Poverty Law Center is a hate group. And the odious obituary for Grady McWhiney powerfully suggests that the

New York Times is a hate group.

One must wonder, must one not, just what sort of individual would merit a dignified obituary from the *Times*, and one did not have to wait long for a perfect example. Dr. Fritz Klein, psychiatrist and sex researcher, died in San Diego on May 24, at the age of 73, though his notice did not appear in the *Times* until June 4. As the author of *The Bisexual Option* (1978), as an editor of *Bisexual and Gay Husbands: Their Stories, Their Words* (2001), as the designer of the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, as a founder of the American Institute of Bisexuality, and as an editor of *The Journal Of Bisexuality*, Dr. Klein was treated with exemplary care, right down to the identity of his partner. Seeing nothing in his career that connected him to the South, one began to understand why Dr. Klein received such a respectful send-off. And one began, did one not, to understand something about the editorial and other values of the *New York Times*.

—James O. Tate

NICHOLAS BURNS, the U.S. undersecretary of state, declared, at a press briefing he gave after returning from a recent trip to the Balkan hot spots, that former Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladic "ordered the execution of 8,000 men and boys at Srebrenica."

Over the last few years, I have sought to get at the truth concerning what happened at Srebrenica. In 2002, I wrote an article for a London magazine, which I entitled "Srebrenica: No Definitive Verdict Yet," in which I summarized several reports: The United Nations Report, the Dutch Report, the Belgrade Law Center Report, the Republika Srpska Report, and some nonofficial studies. While all of these report massacres, in none of them is there proof that Mladic or anyone else ordered large-scale killings or that the number of victims exceeded 2,500. More than one report alleges that many of the victims were killed in armed combat.

Does Undersecretary Burns have proof for his charge?

Recent stories about the discovery of a videotape reportedly showing Serbs in Bosnia killing some Muslims seem to suggest the validity of charges against the Serbs, but the tape shows the massacre of only six men, and it is impossible to tell from the tape anything about the total number of victims or the identity of the perpetrators.

There are other aspects to the story, however. Without taking away any of

the guilt of the Serbs, how are we to assess the blame of others? First, there is the U.N. Security Council, which established the "safe areas" in Bosnia—among them, Srebrenica. U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali twice reminded the Security Council that it had failed to demilitarize the safe areas. In a 1994 document, he pointed to "the need to demilitarise the safe areas and thus establish a regime that would be in line with the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1997, which have gained general acceptance in the international community."

In a May 30, 1995, report, the secretary-general also declared that, "In recent months, [Muslim] government forces have considerably increased their military activity in and around most safe areas, and many of them . . . have been incorporated into the broader military campaign of the government side. . . . The Government also maintains a substantial number of troops in Srebrenica (in this case a violation of a demilitarization agreement), Gorazda and Zepa . . ." So, the Muslims were not exactly innocent.

Sadly, the Security Council ignored the secretary-general's warnings.

In a similar category are the observations of former British Foreign Secretary David Owen, who was appointed by the European Community as cochairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. In his book, *Balkan Odyssey*, Owen flatly asserts that the establishment of the safe areas was "the most irresponsible decision taken during my time as Co-Chairman"—simply because the United Nations failed to demilitarize them. The Muslims, he says, "saw nothing wrong in being protected in safe areas by the UN and attacking out of the safe areas." Owen also made a related charge: "By acquiescing in the Croatian government's seizure of Western Slavonia, the Contact Group had in effect given the green light to the Bosnian Serbs to attack Srebrenica and Zepa."

Consequently, several parties were, in effect, accomplices to the crimes. Those who are charged and found guilty will pay for their actions, but when and how will the Security Council, the Muslims, and others involved pay for their misdeeds?

The concept of a safe haven (or "open city") has a considerable history. The most familiar example is Paris during World War II. Declared an open city by the French (which meant that it would not be defended), the Germans could walk in

without bombing it. Similarly, when the Germans left Rome, they indicated that it would not be defended, and so the Allies did not bomb it. Conversely, because the Japanese insisted on defending Manila, we leveled it, even though it was an Allied city.

I ended my 2002 piece thus: "I believe that it is obvious from what I have written . . . that before we can have a final verdict on Srebrenica, a good deal of arduous work remains to be done." Unless Secretary Burns has some secret that he has not yet revealed, my conclusion still holds.

—Alex Dragnich

CHURCH CONVENTIONS are the business of summertime in democratized Christian America. While normal, sane men are taking their boys to ball games or running trot lines by the light of a Coleman lantern, grown men (and women) are sitting in earnest before professional parliamentarians and video monitors in conference centers across the fruit-ed plane, armed with wireless keypads, ready to decide the fate of their beloved denominations, if not the Faith once delivered to the saints Itself.

Being temporarily insane, I agreed to serve as a delegate to the Northern Illinois District Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which was held (appropriately) at The Q Center in St. Charles, Illinois—the former national training compound for the recently deceased Arthur Andersen LLP. Amid seemingly endless rounds of voting on the multiple *Whereases* and *Resolveds* of a variety of heterodox resolutions, we were treated to various bush-league video presentations on five jumbotron screens, all centered on the LCMS's Ablaze!™ evangelism program/advertising campaign, which appears to be designed to transform Lutherans into Baptists.

At least we had domestic beer and cheap Merlot to help us through. Down in Greensboro, North Carolina, four fifths of the "Messengers" to the Southern Baptist Convention's Annual Meeting voted in favor of a resolution condemning the manufacture and consumption of alcoholic beverages and "urging the exclusion of Southern Baptists who drink from election to the convention's boards, committees and entities." (One conservative, the Rev. Tom Ascol, voiced his opposition to the resolution by noting that Our Lord did, in fact, turn water into wine.) Fortunately, the sober Messengers voted nearly unani-

mously in favor of a resolution urging "the federal government to provide for the security of our nation by controlling and securing our borders."

The real hay was made among denominations that would take a different approach to both the alcohol question and the immigration question. In fact, the liberal Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and the liberaler Episcopal Church, U.S.A., seemed to be in competition to outdo each other in the heresy sweepstakes and capture space in the nation's newspapers.

In recent years, the headline-grabbing EC-USA has distinguished itself for having elected Eugene "Vicky" Robinson, an open sodomite and homewrecker (his own), as bishop, causing schism within the American communion and with other Anglican communions worldwide. Despite significant opposition, on June 18, 50.5319 percent of the House of Bishops elected Katharine Jefferts Schori, who has pledged her full support to "Canon Robinson," as presiding bishop—the first ever female primate in the Anglican communion.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Jefferts Schori, who holds a Ph.D. in oceanography from Oregon State University and has served as a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, has, in her own words, spent time on the cross because of her boldness in standing up for sodomy and homewrecking. In 2003, on the occasion of the elevation of "Canon Robinson," in which she played a part, she appealed to the principle of ecclesiastic democracy: "I believe that the people of New Hampshire have the right to choose the person they believe is best suited to their particular ministry needs." "Several years ago," she continued, "my spiritual director asked me to reflect on the situations in which I was being crucified. This is one of them, and I believe it is a reminder of the presence of God, who suffers with us in our disunity. However, I know Jesus as the one who welcomes those on the margin."

One-upping the Episcopal primate, the PC-USA, after its convention in late June, would have to rephrase the Rt. Rev. Dr. Jefferts Schori's statement to read: "I know Beloved Child as the one who welcomes those on the margin." In a stunning example of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, delegates to the PC-USA's convention voted 282 to 212 to "receive" a document recommending alternatives to the traditional appellations "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The new names for the Persons of the Holy Trinity include "Compassionate Mother, Beloved

Child, and Life-giving Womb"; "Rainbow of Promise, Ark of Salvation, and Dove of Peace"; "Sun, Light, and Burning Ray"; and "Overflowing Font, Living Water, and Flowing River."

Besides the obvious benefit of stamping out the bright-burning flames of patriarchal domination that glow in the hearts of America's Episcopalians, these creative substitutions are designed to foster continuous liturgical renewal. For the Presbyterian celebrant is now free to choose the appropriate appellation for whatever pericopal context in which s/he finds herself. As the *L.A. Times* reports, "a prayer noting God's 'wrath in the face of evil' might use 'Fire That Consumes, Sword That Divides and Storm That Melts Mountains.'" (As in, perhaps, "Keep us from grieving the Storm That Melts Mountains by offering blasphemy in the name of political correctness"?)

"In the last days," writes Saint Paul, "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." When the doctrines of devils are brought to the convention floor, it's safe to say that the plane has already left the runway.

—Aaron D. Wolf

OBITER DICTA: We are pleased to announce that, beginning with this issue, we have added our correspondent **Joe Ecclesia** to our roll of columnists. Mr. Ecclesia's *Letter to the Bishop* will appear in the space following the *Reviews* section, alternating with Philip Jenkins' *Breaking Glass* and Aaron D. Wolf's *Heresies*.

Our poet this month is **Peter Hunt**, a widely published essayist and critic who sits on the editorial board of the *Chester-ton Review*. His poetry has appeared in various journals and magazines.

Our cover art is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George currently resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and his son, William.

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

Additional interior art is provided by **Nicholas Garrie**. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

Socialism Is Theft

The troubles of youth have long been a staple of popular fiction. In 19th-century fiction, wellborn young men borrowed against their future inheritance in order to pay for the wine, women, and song that red-blooded young men have always pursued. In the mid-20th century, readers were titillated by tales of urban ethnic kids—Irish, Jewish, black—whose feelings of anomie led them into a life of senseless violence and amoral hedonism. The 1960's gave us the confused, squirrelly teens, who did not know how to become men—dorky kids such as Holden Caulfield or the manifestly homosexual Sal Mineo in *Rebel Without a Cause*. The “confused teen” has remained the primary role for adolescent males—on or off drugs and with or without criminal records—but, compared with today's instant-messaging kids, Sal Mineo was a paragon of machismo.

I think of my own happy childhood so long ago in the 1950's—the endless days, stretching one into another, we spent in the woods or fishing or playing unorganized baseball: We boycotted Little League and all its pomps because it was too much like school, where self-important grown-ups tried to act as parents without accepting any of the responsibility. I realize, now, that my childhood in the wilds of Wisconsin and my adolescence in South Carolina were not typical experiences, but even suburban kids in those days had some longing for independence. When they arrived at college, their heads addled with the poisons of government schooling, they were ready to make trouble and sing silly songs about a revolution that few of them, fortunately, had the nerve to undertake. Still, they had their dreams. Today's kids, so far from being rebels, are complete conformists, with or without a cause.

I first began noticing the drift into dependency during the Reagan years, when college students, eager to be on the winning team, flocked to the Young Republicans and to conservative organizations on campus. This was widely interpreted as a manifestation of rebellious youth turning against leftist faculty, and perhaps there was, in some cases, an element of rebelliousness; but most of the conservative

students I met or taught were doomed to grow into dittoheads—a term that is used in all sincerity to mean “Don't worry: I checked my brain at the door.” I remember my astonishment, in the 1980's, meeting college students who were already talking about which corporations offered the best retirement plans. At that age, I did not imagine I would live to see 25—and the way I was living more than justified such skepticism. Girls and Greek poetry were my principal inspirations, and Greek still brings pleasure. When a young male is thinking about retirement at the age of 20, he has already given up all hope of ever becoming a man.

I cannot help thinking that the pathetic dependency of conformist American youth has something to do with the fact that the United States is as much a socialist state as, say, Sweden or Great Britain. Yes, it is true that some semblance of the free market survives in third-hand strip malls occupied by lawn-mower-repair businesses and ethnic family restaurants. But everyone knows that the real economic action, even on Main Street USA, is in the corporate chains whose lobbyists in the state and national capitals ensure most-favored status for Wal-Mart and Wendy's, at the expense of Bob's Hardware and Mom's Diner.

“We are all socialists now,” as Sir William Harcourt observed over a century ago, and nothing has so contributed to the socialist mentality of modern life as the disappearance of private property, not only as reality but even as an ideal. American mobility, combined with the frenetic hallucination that “ending is better than mending,” has detached Americans, in particular, from local roots. These days, a home is not the place in which your father was born or your grandfather died; homes are sold by the dozens by realtors who are ever eager to help you move up. If a “home” is nothing more than an investment, it is hard to blame the politicians for thinking they could turn your house and lot into a more socially productive investment by selling it to developers.

The socialist approach to private property was summed up in Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's repeated declaration, “*La*



propriété, c'est le vol!” (“Property is theft!”) The formula was bold enough to elicit praise from Karl Marx, who ordinarily saw merit in mankind only when he was looking into a mirror. However, as Proudhon himself declares in the first chapter of *What is Property?* (1840), he was no revolutionary firebrand. In today's terms, he would probably be described as a libertarian—that is, someone who emphasized individual liberty at the expense of the social and moral preconditions that make liberty possible. Proudhon, naively taking it as given that equality is the prerequisite for justice, thought it self-evident that any system of property that produced inequalities could not be just. Like many another earnest crackpot, he believed that he had rediscovered one of Christ's central moral truths that had been obscured by thousands of years of Christianity.

As a libertarian anarchist, Proudhon accepts the liberal premise that the rule of man over man is fundamentally unjust. From there, it is no great difficulty to show that private-property rights are the source of this injustice. However, crackpots—or, if we wish to be polite, “idealists”—have their uses. Most political theorists, no matter how utopian, believe themselves sober pragmatists who have to make compromises with an ugly reality that divides the world not into left and right but between unscrupulous liberals and unbelieving conservatives. Crackpots and idealists may be almost always wrong, but when they are right (if only by accident), they do not instinctively flinch from the truth. Proudhon's remarks on the injustice of taxation, for example, have the ring of a truth played on a cracked set of chimes.

Why, he asks, should the rich receive greater protection than the poor? (Why, he might have added, do politicians in a democracy enjoy the protection of tax-

supported bodyguards?) On the other hand, why should some people pay at higher rates than others?

The State, through the proportional tax, becomes the chief of robbers; the State sets the example of systematic pillage: the State should be brought to the bar of justice at the head of those hideous brigands, that execrable mob which it now kills from motives of professional jealousy.

Liberty and equality, so he believed, are natural rights, being indispensable to human existence, but property cannot be a natural right, because it exists outside society and was invented, as natural-rights philosophers agree, when men found the communism of primitive society inconvenient. There is thus no absolute property right that is independent of the needs of society, and what society needs is for land to be worked and made productive. It is labor that makes property valuable, not a piece of paper or a legal fiction. Unused land is not an authentic form of property, and income derived from rents and money-lending is illegitimate.

Despite Proudhon's radical rhetoric, he was not really an enemy of property rights as they are understood today. There is even something decent and patriotic in his sense of the common good of the French. He broke both with Marxist socialists on the question of property and with Bakunin as well as Marx on the question of violent revolution. For Marx and Engels, private property—along with political power and patriarchy—were the inventions of oppressors, and no reform was possible. Eventually, all of these had to be destroyed. For Proudhon, possession, so long as it is understood to be contingent on society (and, thus, the state), can fulfill a useful, even indispensable function. What he rejected was any notion of prescription—that is, of property rights stretching back into the mists of “time immemorial.”

For nearly a century, the temporary successes of communist revolutions gave some color to the socialist belief that Marx had got the better of Proudhon. But while Marx was little better than a pettifogging liar building a movement (and never forget that all movements are based fundamentally on lies), Proudhon loved France and saw further than a deracinated intellectual such as Marx could ever see. Marx's denial of property could never form a society of men, especially

since those men had to be leftist hacks who seek comfort through conformity, chanting slogans as Young Communists or Young Republicans, and joining parties, when they are adults, in the expectation of a steady job and a solid pension. Milovan Djilas, more ambitious than most communists, was disgusted by the bourgeois moneygrubbing of his fellow party members, and he delivered the eulogy, some 50 years ago, on the Marxists' claim to destroy property: Communists eliminate, Djilas wrote from experience, all forms of property but their own.

As the Western “democratic” form of socialism continues to triumph over Marxism, it seems clear that it was Proudhon who was the prophet. Today in America, prescriptive rights mean next to nothing, so long as greedy and corrupt local politicians can think of a way of selling your property to a developer who will promote economic “development.”

Few Americans have actually inherited their property from distant ancestors, and our possession is triply contingent on the state. I have already mentioned the right of every level of American government to take property in the public interest. This power is inalienable, according to current legal opinion, because eminent domain is the last vestige of sovereignty retained by the 50 states, which may not and, in fact, cannot legislate such power away. (Someone should explain this legal fact of life to the lawyers drafting legislation to restrict eminent domain, though I have the sneaking suspicion that most of them already know the truth.) Anyone who expects justice or even mercy from politicians, whether in state legislatures or the U.S. Congress, cannot have studied the beast. Not intelligent enough to be a lion or kind enough to be a shark, the true politician is, at best, an amoeba, seeking constantly to grow in substance while poisoning the host that he infests. To surrender any power, including the power to steal, would be to contradict his entire *raison d'être*.

The abuse of eminent domain is only a minor symptom of a much deeper malaise. Our rights of possession are contingent on the power of government at every level to tax property and, if taxes are not paid within a specified period of time, to confiscate it and sell it to the highest bidder. For most of us, this power does not represent an imminent danger, but it is symbolic of our dependency on government.

When property owners do fall behind in their tax payments, they may be trapped by one of the punitive amnesty programs recently enacted in many states. Illinois, so often the pioneer in immoral and unconstitutional legislation, led the way with an unfair and unconstitutional act in 2003, which puts 200-percent interest on penalties for delinquents who do not sign up. Owners who do sign up are required to waive their right to any possible refund.

Even seemingly benign government programs may encourage dependency. In the bad old days before the New Deal, most American families lived either in homes they owned outright or in houses they rented. The mortgage, as it existed then, was typically a short-term loan on property owned by the borrower. In some cases, the borrower had to pay a balloon payment at the end; in others, he paid only the interest and was trapped by debt. In 1932, the New Deal Congress established the Federal Home Loan Bank System, which provided government support for financial institutions that offered amortized loans to home buyers.

On the face of it, a system of home mortgages, which converts rootless workers into solid citizens, seems like one of the few good things the New Deal accomplished, but it has had less benign effects. In the old days, owning a home was an almost metaphysical condition. Men who actually owned their houses did not think about trading them up—any more than they would have thought of trading up their wives or children. They were

SAVE A STAMP!

E-mail your letters to the editor to:

polemics@chroniclesmagazine.org

rooted in one place from which no one could dislodge them. If they did not have enough money to purchase a house, they waited and saved. Many, of course, never saved enough money even to dream of owning their own place, but, then, how were they worse off than home "owners" today, who pay ten years on house after house that they never really own?

I still own nothing outright here,
the land
is not ours, in hock to the am-
persand
of banks, insurance, federal offic-
es . . .

And, to cap it all, many current mortgages have all the disadvantages of the pre-New Deal system. Upwardly mobile corporate slaves are buying "homes" with little or no money down in the expectation that the real-estate market will continue to bubble without bursting. When the market turns against them, they lose everything.

Whatever they may earn, working stiff who depend for their very existence on government agencies and corporations larger than most nation-states are a far cry from the confident and assured citizens of the old America. The old Ameri-

cans were men and women few government lackeys wished to provoke. Today, we seem to live at the behest of powerful and impersonal forces. At best, we are their loyal (and timid) retainers.

Is this result—the weakening of our character—intentional? I do not know, but the motives of politicians are always suspect. The most successful lie put forth by neoconservatives is the so-called law of unintended consequences, which would have us believe that the architects of centralized state education, the New Deal, and the Great Society did not realize that the consequence of taking control of schooling might be to transfer authority from families and communities to state and federal bureaucracies, and they never imagined that, in paying people to do nothing, they would not only discourage the necessary habits of work and thrift but undermine the self-reliance and initiative that supposedly characterized the true American. This same political class, we are called upon to believe, had absolutely no idea that the 1965 Immigration Act would dramatically alter the ethnic composition of the United States or that flooding the Horn of Africa with weapons would lead to war. *Credat Apella iudaeus!*

Socialism marches on, and, in its prog-

ress, it attracts more and more dedicated capitalists and free-enterprise capitalists to the cause. Planned obsolescence in appliances is good, argues one libertarian con man, because we should always be buying the new and improved model. The same argument applies to houses, wives, families, and communities. We are all caught up in Progress Fever, like the Gold Fever that sent so many foolish men to die, far away from all they loved, in California or Montana.

Economic liberty and free enterprise can be maintained only by a certain kind of human character that is created and nourished under certain specific social and cultural conditions. A farmer who farms his own land and defends it with his gun, who supervises the schooling of his children and sits on his church's vestry, is a far cry from a deracinated consumer who switches houses every five years and pays other people to protect him. The consumer may make and spend far more money, but he does not have a clue as to the meaning of the term *economic liberty*, and, when times are hard, he will cry like a stuck pig for government to reach out its ever-extending arms to save him from the consequences of his cowardice and greed. 

Alone in the Highlands

by Peter Hunt

A keen inquiring wind
Across the Highlands
Searches all my bones
And yet the love of lonely places
Rough with aged stones
Warms my being. Memories
Swim and surge, as flights
Of birds, rising from the heather
Ascend to evening skies
Filled with threats of snow.
Once, a people lived in huts
And cottages, tilled the austere earth
And clung to bonds of clan
And ancient lore; but now no more.

Sins of Omission

by Roger D. McGrath

Guadalcanal: An Emotion, Not a Name

In most history textbooks today, coverage of the war in the Pacific consists of a summary of the Battle of Midway, a brief mention of leapfrogging islands, and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Battle of Midway is almost invariably described as the “turning point” in the Pacific campaign that put the Japanese on the defensive. While Midway was a spectacular and stunning American victory, it did not put the Japanese on the defensive or mean that America had achieved naval supremacy. The American triumph meant only that Japan would not occupy Midway Atoll or use it as a staging ground for an invasion of Hawaii and that Japan would have one less ring of defense in the Pacific. After the battle, Japan continued on the offensive in the CBI (China-Burma-India) theater and in the Southwest Pacific, areas of far more importance to her than Midway or Hawaii.

The battle that changed the course of the war in the Pacific was Guadalcanal. It is a name unknown to most students today, perhaps because a discussion of the campaign would entail a description of Japanese savagery that would shatter politically correct sensibilities. This was certainly not the case until well into the 1960's, when just mention of the name sent shivers up and down the spine. And well it should, for it was on Guadalcanal that the Marines, including two of my cousins, learned that the Japanese had no regard for the Geneva Accords or any other rules of warfare and committed atrocities that would make the Apache envious.

On August 7, 1942, Marines of the 1st Marine Division waded ashore on a mountainous, jungle-clad island at the southeastern end of the Solomon chain. Approaching Guadalcanal under a foul-weather front, the American fleet and the Marines caught the Japanese by surprise. By nightfall, 10,000 Marines were ashore. The next day, the jarheads captured a nearly completed airstrip, which they named Henderson Field in honor of Maj. Lofton Henderson, a Marine pilot who had died at Midway. Control of Henderson Field would be critical for the Marines in the battle for the island that raged for more than four months. Then

the Army arrived and spent two months mopping up.

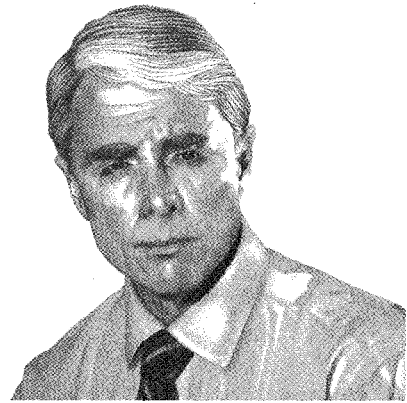
At sea, the U.S. Navy was fighting to survive. In the Battle of Savo Island on August 9, the Navy suffered its worst defeat in history, losing four heavy cruisers and more than 1,000 men. Six more major battles would follow, including the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal in which admirals “Uncle Dan” Callaghan and Norman Scott, both posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, and the five Sullivan brothers died. The brutal punch-outs at sea cost each side more than two-dozen warships—carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers—and thousands of men.

On land, the Marines were fighting not only the Japanese but disease and hunger. Dengue fever and malaria debilitated thousands, and a shortage of food meant the average Marine, lean to begin with, lost 25 pounds in his four months on the island. Col. “Red Mike” Edson told his men of the 1st Raider Battalion, “There’s plenty of chow. The Japs have it. Take it away from them.”

Japanese warships bombarded the Marines nightly, and Japanese aircraft bombed Henderson Field daily. The thousands of crack Japanese troops already on the island were reinforced every few nights by men and materiel dropped off by the “Tokyo Express”—fast destroyers—steaming down “The Slot,” the channel through the Solomons. The Japanese commander on Guadalcanal told his troops, “This is the battle that will decide the fate of the Japanese Empire.” But not to worry. A training manual told them:

Westerners—being very haughty, effeminate and cowardly—intensely dislike fighting in the rain or mist or dark. They cannot conceive night to be a proper time for battle—though it is excellent for dancing. In these weaknesses lie our great opportunity.

The Japanese counteroffensive began in pitch-darkness early on August 21 at Alligator Creek, a mile east of Henderson Field. Mortar rounds arched overhead toward the Marines positioned there, and Japanese machine-gun fire erupted.



Then the cry of “Banzai!” filled the air, and more than 800 Japanese, with fixed bayonets, came on the run, firing from the hip and lobbing grenades. The Marines returned fire with '03 Springfields, Thompsons, BARs, and machine guns—until their barrels warped from the heat of continuous firing. At different points, fighting became hand-to-hand. With K-bars, bayonets, and rifle butts, the Marines took on the vaunted jungle fighters who had overrun much of Asia and the Pacific and shredded them. Of the attacking force of Japanese, only two remained alive by late afternoon. The Marines suffered 44 dead and 71 wounded.

Similarly fierce battles with similar results continued night after night, week after week. Unarmed Navy corpsmen, treating wounded Marines, were shot by Japanese snipers. Wounded Japanese would cry out for aid, but when a corpsman went forward to help, the wounded enemy would detonate a grenade. The Japanese lived and died by their code of *bushido*, giving no quarter to themselves or the enemy. Captured Marines suffered unspeakable torture. Their bodies were found skinned, dismembered, or decapitated, often with their genitals severed and stuffed in their mouths. This was not Europe. For their part, the Japanese learned that they were not fighting “effeminate Westerners” but the descendants of Boone, Crockett, and Hickok. Now their names were Scott, Callaghan, Sullivan, and Edson—and “Ches-ty” Puller, John Basilone, Joe Foss, Marion Carl, Ken Bailey, Doug Munro, Joe Bauer, Mitchell Paige, and hundreds of others of the breed.

In the battle for Guadalcanal, the Japanese lost more than 30,000 men. A few days after his evacuation by destroyer, Maj. Gen. Kiyotake Kawaguchi told a Japanese war correspondent, “We lost the battle. And Japan has lost the war.”

The Natural History of the Night Watchman State

A Culture of Autonomy

by Donald W. Livingston

Liberalism, in all its guises, is a vision of the final form of political association. All history is viewed as a slow and painful struggle toward the realization of the liberal state. Other forms of political association are not denied value, but only because they can be seen as approximations to liberalism. The universalism of liberalism is of a peculiar kind; it is not a universalism rooted in and inseparable from a tradition ordered by a vision of the good. Liberalism rejects the idea of an overarching good in favor of a plurality of heterogeneous goods. And what makes these goods *good* is that they are the preferences of someone. The goodness of a thing is its being chosen. Hence, the central moral idea in liberalism is *rights*. Rights are devices that enable us to make the choices of a life plan. And rights are thought to be *neutral* in respect to the good. As Ronald Dworkin says, "rights are trumps."

In a truly liberal society, the good is seen as a private matter. The public realm is the realm of rights and choice making, as in a market where preferences are traded. It is this distinction that enables liberals to insist on the separation of religion and state. Why this obsession to keep the public space unstained by religious culture? One reason is the liberal's understanding of good. If the essence of the good is its being chosen, then it is impossible that there should be an overarching good to human life around which diverse goods could be ordered. Goods are radically heterogeneous and are incapable of hierarchical ordering. This means that the liberal soul itself lacks any overall unity but must compartmentalize the goods it pursues. And so, in liberal society, we are always confronting unbridgeable divisions: the individual and society; morality and law; liberty and authority; the public and the private; state and society. This compartmentalization of the self is celebrated not as a weakness but an achievement. Liberal philosopher John Rawls makes this very clear: "Human good is heterogeneous because the aims of the self are heterogeneous. Although to subordinate all our aims to one end does not strictly speaking violate the principles of rational choice . . . it still strikes us as irrational or more likely as mad . . ." What Rawls sees as madness, Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and Christian civilization see as the essential core of the good: its power to give unity and wholeness to a life and to a society.

Liberalism, then, is an ideology of radical individual autonomy. And the goal of liberal political order is to maximize the sphere within which one can make choices. As the libertarian theorist Robert Nozick neatly put it, "from each as he chooses to each as he is chosen." This is not a maxim peculiar to libertarianism; it undergirds Marxism as well. Marx, in his vision of the classless society, presents an order in which one can do as he pleases. As he famously put it, one could fish in the morning, hunt in the afternoon, and do literary criticism in the evening,

without having to be a hunter, fisherman, or critic. In the early 70's, Jean Paul Sartre asked Castro the meaning of his revolution. Castro replied that a man should have what he wants. Sartre asked, *What if he wants the moon?* Castro reflected and then answered that he should have it. Rather than recognize this remark as the absurdity it is, Sartre found a deep truth in it.

At bottom, the ideology of liberalism and Marxism is to maximize autonomy, or choice making. The difference is that liberalism is willing to allow an inequality of wealth, privileges, and status as long as that outcome was arrived at by a fair procedure; the Marxist cannot tolerate this unequal outcome. Poverty, ignorance, and disease, he insists, are restraints on individual autonomy. So there must be massive concentrations of power in the state to rectify unequal outcomes for the sake of maximizing autonomy. This "dictatorship of the proletariat" turned out to be a pathetic absurdity. In their obsessive quest to maximize individual autonomy, Marxists, socialists, and communists not only minimized autonomy but centralized power on an unprecedented scale, giving rise to totalitarianism.

Few are prepared to defend these regimes today, not because they have been refuted (they were refuted on their first appearance) but because they have collapsed and are now unfashionable. But we should never forget that progressive liberal elites once had great respect for Marxist regimes. Franklin Roosevelt affectionately referred to Stalin as "Uncle Joe"; Eleanor Roosevelt refused to judge Stalin because she did not know his heart; Leonard Bernstein threw cocktail parties on behalf of Chairman Mao. (If we had the *chutzpah* of a Daniel Goldhagen, we might call these liberal fellow travelers Stalin's and Mao's "willing executioners.") And later, when liberals criticized Marxist regimes, they did so respectfully, unlike their unrestrained criticism of the much-milder regimes of Italian and Spanish fascism. Even today, when we know that communist regimes were worse than had been imagined, it is still impolite to use "communism" as a symbol of something evil. The preferred symbol of evil for the liberal is something called "fascism" or "racism." For, again, Marxist totalitarianism contains the *principle* (if not the practice) of maximizing choices; and so it is cut from the same cloth as liberalism. A hundred million perished under communist regimes; yet, ideologically, they all held high the flag of human freedom. It is characteristic of liberalism to believe in the efficacy of words and abstract principles, and to think that society can be transformed by passing a law.

During the Cold War, it was often said that the difference between Marxism and the liberal West is that the former is collectivist while the latter is individualist. This hides more than it reveals. It is certainly true that Marxist regimes were state-imposed forms of collectivism; the Soviet Union was the most centralized regime in history. Yet it was liberalism that created the first state-imposed collectivist regime. The first collectiv-

Contributing editor Donald W. Livingston is professor of philosophy at Emory University.

ism was not socialism but *nationalism*. And the first regime to rule explicitly in the name of individual autonomy (“the rights of man”) was that created by the French Revolution. It was also the first nationalist regime, and the first to institute a modern reign of terror.

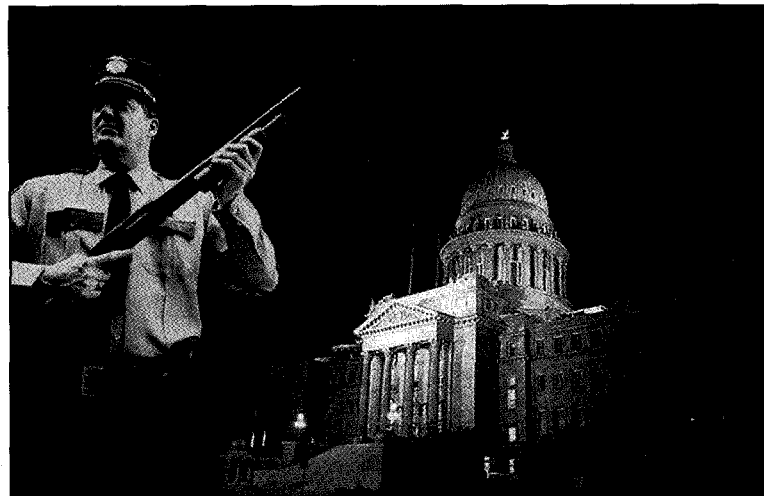
The union of nationalism and liberalism seems an unlikely combination: Liberalism is a universalist ideology, whereas nationalism is a parochial notion favoring a certain people. What is absurd in concept, however, can be cobbled together by history. In order to protect the individual’s right to make choices, massive centralization of power was required. The major threat to autonomy, it was thought, came from independent social authorities such as the Church, nobility, provincial governments, the crown, and a hundred other restrictions rooted in the traditions of the *ancien régime*. Finally, with the elimination of these independent social authorities, the individual would be truly free to pursue his own life plans under the protection of a government now more centralized and more powerful than that of any 18th-century monarch. But with tradition eliminated, what was to justify this massive augmentation of central power?

The answer was found in shifting allegiance from the person of the king to that of a fictitious nation-person called France. The massive centralization of power by the government would be legitimate because it would represent the French people. The problem was that the French people did not exist. The notion of “the people” or “the nation” put forth in the French Revolution was inspired by the classical republican tradition. But in that tradition, the republic is small—no larger than around 50,000 to 200,000 people, and usually much smaller. Rousseau’s Geneva, on which the republic described in the *Social Contract* is modeled, had a population of around 25,000. In a republic of this scale, where citizens have face-to-face knowledge of one another, it makes some sense to speak of “equality” and “fraternity.” The mistake the French revolutionaries made (and which has been repeated since by most modern “republics”) was to stretch the republican notions of “people” and “nation” onto countries the size of France or larger. A parallel would be building to scale a charming English cottage the size of St. Paul’s Cathedral. The result would be a monstrosity.

And so it was in building the fiction called the French nation. What had existed previously was not a nation but a “realm” of independent and quasi-independent social authorities having allegiance to the king. As Van Creveld has observed, only between 1 and 13 percent of people in France in the 1790’s could speak “French” correctly; and it was not spoken in the south at all. In 1789, the realm of France contained 80 provincial governments, each having its own laws, customs, and traditions. France resembled a federation more than a modern unified state. To destroy these independent social authorities would require the full force of state violence, and it would take time. Even in the late 19th century, studies in France showed that most schoolchildren, when asked to name their country, mentioned their province. So the revolutionary regime was the first to engage in the state-imposed project of “nation-building”—a project imitated by every would-be nation-state since. It is just this project that the United States is pursuing in Iraq, and with the same ideological justification: A vast-scale unitary state is necessary to maximize an ethic of choice making in the territory known as Iraq.

Thus, liberalism as an ideology came down from the tran-

scendent realm of philosophy and became incarnate in the new state-created nationalisms. Rawls and other liberals, who deem the traditional idea of an overarching good in moral and political life a form of madness, have no difficulty swallowing whole the overarching collectivist fiction of the nation as a condition for liberalism. Lord Acton observed in the middle of the 19th century that three ideologies dominated: nationalism, liberalism, and socialism. Of these, he thought that nationalism would have the longest life—and he was right. All liberalisms have been nationalist liberalisms; and all socialisms have been national socialisms.



Melanie Anderson

What Acton did not explain is how socialism is a natural development of liberalism.

We have seen that the *telos* of liberalism and socialism is individual autonomy and that both presuppose the framework of a unitary nation-state; they differ only in the means—namely, in their use of the state. This is, of course, not a trivial difference. Liberalism in its purest form would be an approximation to what libertarians such as Nozick call the “minimal state” or the “night-watchman state.” This sort of state is limited to protecting life, liberty, and property rights and enforcing contracts. Here, we seem to have choice making maximized to the highest degree. But if we look more closely, a different picture emerges. Liberalism, as it actually exists in the world, is embedded in the framework of the nation-state. This state will typically be very large because the maximization of individual autonomy is a human right and consequently demands a global solution (or, failing that, the most extensive regime possible). And it will be a unitary state with a central authority having a monopoly on coercion within its territory. It must have an extensive police force, criminal-justice system, and revenue to bring to trial and punish every claim that valid choice making has been violated.

Since no night-watchman state has ever existed in abstract purity, the most we can suppose is one in close approximation to it, which means that those traditional independent social authorities whose destruction was required to establish the nationalist framework necessary for liberalism will still survive. And so there will be radical disagreement as to what can count as a violation of the individual’s autonomy, even if everyone is committed to the ideal of the night-watchman state. Many will find prohibitions against women’s suffrage, public nudity, child pornography, shopping on Sunday, women in combat, public prayers, etc. to be violations of the individual’s autonomy. Others will find these prohibitions compatible with exercises of one’s autonomy *properly conceived*. Nor are there any “neutral”

principles that can decide among these conflicts. "Do what you like as long as you don't harm anyone" merely pushes the question back to a more fundamental moral disagreement.

Nevertheless, the night-watchman state must make a decision about these prohibitions. And whatever the decision, it will appear to the losing side as an imposition of the state on the individual's freedom. Such conflicts over what counts as a legitimate exercise of autonomy are an intractable zero-sum game. Consequently, the night-watchman state will separate into distinct parties, each pursuing its own vision of individual autonomy. To gain votes, party leaders will be tempted to be more than night watchmen: They will use tax revenue—only moderately, at first—to foster their clients and what they consider valid exercises of autonomy. And we must not forget that the night-watchman state—as its approximations have appeared to us in history—is a nationalist regime. To defend the national honor and interest, a defense force will be needed, as well as ambassadors, census takers, tax collectors, and so forth. There will no doubt be an attempt to satisfy these needs by private contractors, and one can expect the revenue of the minimal state to be small, at first. But experience shows that, once a state bureaucracy appears, it tends to grow at the expense of society. Libertarians are as prone to temptation as the rest of mankind and have been known to steal, lie, commit adultery, and fall into self-deception. With the steady growth of a state bureaucracy within the framework of a centralized nation-state, and a population engaged in intractable and irresolvable conflict over what autonomy means, we are on the road to socialism.

What completes the connection is the mass of people coughed up by the hollowing out of those independent social authorities rooted in tradition that proved troublesome for maximizing choice making: the family, the Church, the nobility, the crown, free cities and leagues of cities, *etc.* Cut loose from these moorings, many found a life of choice making to be a burden, even frightful. The loss of a moral tradition means that people no longer know how to behave. In this condition, the deracinated look for an authority to replace tradition or seek to exercise their own will to power; in either case, they are naturally inclined to the state. The night watchman was loath at first to compromise his strict standard of "negative liberty" (the state merely leaves you alone) in favor of "positive liberty" (the state subsidizes the individual to maximize choice making, by providing an education, food stamps, healthcare). But eventually, the night watchman (who has ambitions like everyone else) could be bought off or even be persuaded to change his mind. Since everyone in the minimum state thinks he belongs to a collective thing called the "nation," it will be easy, in times of crisis, to justify forays against negative liberty. And given the intractable quarrels in the night-watchman state over what is to count as valid choice making, these forays will grow, if not checked, into a full-blown socialist state.

The only check possible is the existence of those surviving independent social authorities rooted in traditions that have more or less survived the process of nationalist-cleansing carried out by post-French-revolutionary liberal regimes. Where those institutions are strong, the move from the liberal to the socialist state is restrained. Few liberals understand this process and so do not understand the role liberalism played in the horrors of the 20th century.

Liberal ideology created nationalism—the first mass collectivism—as an instrument for legitimating a unitary state in pursuit of an ideology of individual autonomy. This nation-state

gradually turned into a socialist state; finally, in those cases where independent social authorities were severely weakened, it turned into totalitarian communist states. Hitler did not create the massive centralization of power in the German nation-state; he inherited it as a legacy of German liberalism. Hitler simply tightened the controls and put the state to illiberal ends.

Libertarians are constantly shocked at the progressive deterioration of individual liberty and the monstrous growth of the state. No matter what party is in power, there are more taxes, more regulations, more bureaucracy, and (even after the collapse of the Soviet Union) more international conflicts.

Their remedy is to hold high the ethic of individual autonomy and to return as close as possible to an approximation of the night-watchman state. They do not understand that the genetic code of the modern socialist state was contained in the night-watchman state from the beginning. The former is the fulfillment of the latter. The error of liberalism and socialism is the same: the ideology of individual autonomy. Choice making is not an ethic that can stand on its own; it always occurs in the context of a cultural inheritance. What we desire are not abstract choices but *meaningful* choices, and it is against this cultural background (usually unrecognized) that choices become meaningful. To maximize my choices by eliminating that cultural background is to render choice meaningless. But the cultural background is inherited, not chosen; so there is an absolute limit to choice making. No theory of individual liberty can be coherent that does not recognize this limit.

In rejecting the liberal (and socialist) ideology of autonomy, we must also reject nationalism (without which liberalism and socialism, in their historic forms, are impossible). The point of nationalism was to legitimate a unitary state that could clear the ground of inherited moral traditions for the sake of individual autonomy. But individual liberty, properly understood, has its source in precisely those inherited traditions and practices that liberalism sees as a threat. Liberty requires legal protection for individual autonomy *and* for the corporate liberty of a people to live out a valuable way of life, binding generations. Living in the wreckage of the liberal and/or socialist nation-state, it is a nice question as to what form this protection can now take. We can get a glimpse of an outline perhaps from the Middle Ages, when thousands of independent and quasi-independent social and political units flourished without the protection of the modern unitary state. Such protection was not always the most desirable, but can we honestly say that the modern state, from the French Revolution, through two world wars, and the wars within the Cold War, has adequately protected the life, liberty, property, and culture of its citizens?

Perhaps, in the future, liberty can best be preserved in polities of large scale that contain a great number of small states, each able to provide legal protection for a valuable way of life—and where the essential principle of this sort of federation would be not that of indivisible unity but of secession for states and individuals. This would be quite a different kind of political order from what we are used to. But it bears more than a superficial resemblance to the Founding Fathers' federative polity—before it was overwhelmed by the fateful 19th-century union of nationalism and an ideology of autonomy. Instead of seeing this union as the disaster that it was, we are taught to celebrate it as a great achievement in liberty—while, at the same time, we wonder how it happens that we are constantly losing our liberties and our cultural inheritance. ◊

Thoughts on Socialism

The Failure of Economic Man

by John Lukacs



One day, perhaps, a great history of socialism will be written. A daunting task, but not impossible, since socialism, the “ism,” is not very old—a relatively new phenomenon, during the last 200 years or even less. A history of social justice; a history of the working classes; a history of the poor—that would overwhelm any historian. “The poor you will always have with you,” Christ said. He taught social justice—indeed, more than that. Humbleness and mercy were virtues that the pagan world, despite its wisdom, did not know. To say that Christ was a socialist is stretching that word unduly—an imprecise exaggeration, though not without an uncertain little crumb of truth. A capitalist He certainly was not.

Two hundred years after the American and the French and other democratic revolutions, we ought to recognize that democracy, just about inevitably, tends toward some kind of socialism. Call it the welfare state, or the provider state, or the egalitarian society—it does not matter. What mattered was that, sooner or later, every government became dependent on the support (or at least of the consent) of its working classes. What mattered was that, sooner or later, equality before the law had to include social justice. Where this evolution was obstructed, or hampered, or unduly slow, socialism and socialist parties arose, in Western Europe, Scandinavia, Britain. Less than a century after their first appearance, they were capable, because of universal suffrage, to become majority parties in this or that state and form governments. But, by the time that happened, this, too, mattered relatively little, since the practices, the institutions, the legislation of providing welfare were accepted, willy-nilly, by all governments of the Western world, including the nonsocialist ones.

By now, in the beginning of the 21st century, it may even

be argued that the definitions of categories of *socialism* and *socialist* are either too narrow or too broad: They are losing their meaning, though not quite yet. Consider how the term *working class* has become largely meaningless, too. Everybody—coal miners and pornographic actors—is a worker; waiters work, as do their customers. (Consider the current American phrase in a restaurant: “Are you still working on your appetizer?”) That fewer and fewer people work with their hands, and that fewer and fewer people produce anything material is, of course, another development, beyond the province of this short little essay.

However—socialism is not yet a *wasm*. Like “liberalism” it is beginning to disintegrate—for many reasons, of which a most important one is that it has won. The aims of its earlier proponents and adherents have been fulfilled, in places and at times beyond their dreams. There hardly exists any state on the globe now that does not provide some kind of social security and unemployment compensation and medical insurance. But almost everywhere this happened not because of the popularity of socialist doctrines or of socialist parties; it happened because of the unavoidable relationship of democratization with social justice.

There was one, great and deep, shortcoming of socialism contributing to its occasional and eventual unpopularity. That shortcoming it shared with its avowed enemy, capitalism (which, like socialism, is disintegrating—another subject beyond the purview of this essay). Both socialism and capitalism had a false concept of human nature: that of Economic Man. Both—and, perhaps especially, socialists—failed to see that the aspirations of the so-called working classes (and perhaps especially of their women) were not very different from those of the so-called middle classes: Their aspirations were those of respectability. Both—and perhaps especially socialists—failed to see that the conflicts of classes became less decisive than the conflicts of nations. Socialist internationalism was an intellec-

John Lukacs is an historian and author, most recently, of *June 1941: Hitler and Stalin* (Yale University Press).

Of the still-extant monstrous political parties, the Republicans have been, by and large, more nationalistic than socialistic—the Democrats, the obverse. Hence the relative ascendancy of the Republicans after World War II.

tual (and abstract) doctrine: It did not really appeal to the working classes. A great change, beginning more than 130 years ago, was the mutation of much of old-fashioned patriotism into a newer and populist nationalism. Sooner, rather than later, the very internationalism of socialist spokesmen not only ceased to attract; it became a handicap. “Christian Socialist” and “National Socialist” parties and movements arose. They rejected internationalism and preached the cult of the nation. Their most striking proponent was Adolf Hitler. He united nationalism with socialism. The very origin of the word *Nazi* is telling. When his, at first minuscule, political party appeared,

people called them “Nazi-Sozi,” an abbreviation of Nationalist Socialists, to distinguish them from the internationalist socialists and their adherents. Very soon, the “Sozi” disappeared, and the universal term became “Nazi”—another proof that the nationalist adjective meant infinitely more than its partner, the socialist one.

Does this relate to the history of the United States? Very much indeed. A socialist party in this country never got very far, because it was (and looked) not nationalist enough. Even at the worst times of capitalist dominance, the American working classes saw socialism as something abstract and unnatural, a foreign importation. Around 1910, American socialists had a few successful political candidates, but that was a flurry. But before that, and ever since, the—then still recognizable—American working classes have been more nationalist than almost any other class within the American social sphere. And, when it comes to the mixture (or compound) of nationalism and socialism, this universal phenomenon is applicable to the American political system, too. Of the still-extant monstrous political parties, the Republicans have been, by and large, more nationalistic than socialistic—the Democrats, the obverse. Hence the relative ascendancy of the Republicans after World War II.

They may be getting into trouble now—because of their advocacy of “globalism,” which is but another name for international capitalism. That is speculation. What is not speculation is that the quest for, and the institutionalization of, social justice have both preceded and survived the appeal of political socialism. Whether these institutions will survive some kind of an unprecedented catastrophe that would involve the dissolutions of states and governments as we still know them, however, I cannot tell. 

Introductory Latin

The Complete Course for Beginning Latin Students

“The Rockford Institute’s Latin class is just what I had been seeking to fill the gaps in my education. I am midway through the first-year course, thoroughly enjoying the readings, the exercises, and the lectures on tape.”



Dr. Thomas Fleming, the instructor, holds a Ph.D. in classics from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. “Introductory Latin” is an opportunity for autodidacts of all ages to learn Latin using the same methods used by the greatest minds of the West.

For those who have already purchased the first semester, the second is now available as a separate unit (“Introductory Latin 2”).

For more information, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811 or e-mail jkooistra@rockfordinstitute.org.



THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE

928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

Prices: Second semester: \$175.00 / Entire course: \$350.00
(Please indicate your choice of tapes or CDs)

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

The Idea of Socialism

A Heresy and Its Legacy

by Claude Polin



The received wisdom today seems to be that, with the downfall of Soviet communism, socialism has lost its pungency. Not only has Marxism proper reputedly crumbled, together with the Berlin Wall, but the somewhat watered-down type of socialism that survives Marxism has been forced to come to terms with its archrival, economic liberalism, which is thereby declared the real winner of the century-old competition. The echo still rumbles of the Fukuyama pamphlet, published with a fracas as a landmark of Reagan's triumphal march, shrouded with a vague Hegelian spirit, which hailed the end of history and the total demise of backward ideologies.

Now, it may be argued, with some reason, that quite a few basic principles of Marxist socialism, particularly its socioeconomic dogmas (the labor theory of value, the ever-increasing pauperization of the proletariat, and so forth) have been left to the critique of mice. The irreplaceable effectiveness of private individual initiative and the corollary inefficiency of state-controlled economy (and of economic planning and collective ownership of the means of production) are generally acknowledged.

But there is something just as glaring as the achievements of economic liberalism: however obvious the failures of socialism (its economic inefficiency resulting in constant degradation of its living standards, a general shabbiness of life and dreariness of intellectual activity, *etc.*), socialism remains popular. Like a wave that may once have receded, it sweeps back into power—not only in France, where its most dogmatic and backward principles prevail more than ever, but in England, Spain, Italy, Austria, Greece, Poland, and even Germany, countries in which anything is preferable to whatever smacks of rightist conservatism. The word *socialism* seems to mean “better red than right.”

Corresponding editor Claude Polin is a professor at the University of Paris-Sorbonne.

In other words, common sense imposes the evidence: There is something about socialism that has nothing to do with economic performance, and that is the reservoir from which it draws its continued strength, in both backward countries and the most modern ones. The Wall has been torn down, but only as if to allow what was behind it to proceed forward without encumbrance.

Socialism, far from being dead, is actually like a subcutaneous worm eating away at the very core of our civilization. Why? Because, I think, socialism is deeply rooted in Western civilization, because it is somehow congenial to the Western mentality, to such an extent that I do not think socialism could have been born, had it not been for the Western soul.

I do not mean to suggest that socialism represents the essence of Western civilization: It is only a built-in weakness of it. A heart disease stems from the structure of the heart even if it is eventually lethal to it.

Let me try to prove this hypothesis in the simplest possible terms.

Christianity, at heart, is a galaxy of ideas revolving around a central one. Mankind is living in a state of unhappiness and wretchedness; this world is but a valley of sorrow. But this is man's fault, and God, Who had not made him to be miserable, decides to help and sends His Son as a model for all men to follow in order to retrieve their original happiness. Hence, Christianity is indeed the preaching of a revolution that will liberate man from the torments and tormenters of this world. “Think not,” said Jesus, “that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). Is His Kingdom a faraway dream? Nay, for Jesus said, “As you go, preach, saying the kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:7). And what will the new world be? Christ said it: “The last shall be the first” (Matthew 20:16 and 19:30), and again, “Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God, blessed

are ye that hunger now, for you shall be filled . . . but woe unto you that are rich" (Luke 6:20, 25) "for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 20:24). But how is this Kingdom to be reached? Jesus answered: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor" (Matthew 19:21).

Jesus' teachings contain two crucial ideas. The first is that men are not saved just because Christ died for their sins, as a simplistic version would have it. Christ died because He showed that the way to a new life was to reject the present one. This, of course, does not mean that all men have actually to die (Jesus was no Charles Manson!), but it means that all men have to strive to change their outlook on this life.

detachment—a detachment that allows men to enjoy whatever is naturally enjoyable in this world without becoming enslaved by delights whose nature is to be fragile and temporary, and a detachment that allows them to realize that there may be something beyond essentially animal pleasures. In other words, what Jesus teaches is a revolution *within the soul*—another way to look at things, a transformation in the way to conceive of them, a liberation whose primary engine is the freedom that every man carries within himself as a thinking being, for thought is nothing if not an ability to distance oneself from the immediate impression produced by things. This is why Jesus can say that His Kingdom is at hand, because He means that the soul's conversion to detachment depends only on the will of the individual.

If a revolution is about to occur, it will be because men have properly understood Christ's words, because they will have transformed themselves out of a personal, inner effort into new men. And then, of course, nothing will be the same any more. But since nothing will happen unless each man has *converted*, it is obvious that detachment must be preached equally to rich and poor alike. The poor do not have any particular virtue. They are made of the same clay as the rich, of the same flesh equally prone to temptation. The poor, looking forward to becoming rich, commit the same spiritual sin as the rich who cling to their wealth or want to increase it. Of course, Jesus addressed the rich preferably to the poor, but that is only because the rich, if only by their being rich, show themselves to be particularly enamored of worldly glories as well as more prone to try constantly to get more. But inasmuch as the poor are not in dire need of the essentials of life (and if they are, it is only natural that they be helped as much as they help themselves), the poor can fall prey to the same lethal illusion as the rich and strive for the wrong happiness.

However obvious the meaning of Jesus' teachings, it is just as obvious that there is, in His words, a possible temptation for the poor to confuse deprivation of material goods with detachment from them, to attach something saintly to poverty, and to believe that He was promising salvation to the poor merely because they were poor.

Once the soul has completed its inner revolution, it becomes immune to the entrapments of this world and, particularly, to the confusion of wealth with happiness. The true Christian will not consider making money as an end worthy of a man's life; he will have a natural propensity to live the simple and frugal life that has been constantly praised by the agrarian tradition. (Hence, his liberality and his natural ability to be charitable to the ones who suffer from hunger and shiver with cold.) Eventually, some may even take asceticism as a way of life and become monks. So, all in all, it may be said that the good Christian will not be a rich man, because he finds no particular interest in being rich. The crucial point here, though, is that the general contempt for wealth within Christianity is but a consequence, a result, an effect of a previous spiritual decision not to count it a blessing to become ever richer. It is because the Christian has begun his redemption that he does not care anymore about being rich. At this point, however, there is plenty of room for a complete misreading of the words. For, if redemption brings about an indifference to wealth, isn't it possible to believe that the poor somehow carry some kind of predisposition to redemption? In other words, wasn't Jesus, while addressing the poor, saying that poverty is the only way to

Socialism, far from being dead, is actually like a subcutaneous worm eating away at the very core of our civilization. Why? Because, I think, socialism is deeply rooted in Western civilization, because it is somehow congenial to the Western mentality.

The second idea is that all men suffer, even those who are generally believed to be happy—i.e., those who appear to be endowed with all the glories of this world. And, since they are the ones who are generally envied, since all men strive to emulate them, Jesus chooses them as perfect examples of what men should not be if they wish to be happy. Hence, his famous words about the poor being closer to redemption than the rich.

The whole development of Christianity hinges on the meaning that is given to these three ideas: A revolution is at hand; the intercession of a savior makes the revolution possible; the revolution is complete when the first are the last.

What Jesus meant is, I think, quite obvious and has always been so to honest Christians. He teaches, first and foremost, that, if men are unhappy, it is essentially because they have become attached beyond all reason to the wrong kind of happiness, to immediate and essentially material pleasures, and particularly wealth and whatever it can buy. God could have made men such that they would never be lured by its temptation, but then men would not have been free creatures. So Jesus taught that it is man's responsibility to understand where his true happiness lies and to escape the fallacy of immediate and passing satisfactions. Jesus never says that men should live as dogs, or practice any extreme asceticism; He only preaches

redemption? Instead of poverty being the natural outcome of a conversion that turns the wretched creature into a redeemed one, indifferent to wealth (though not dedicated to wretchedness), all of a sudden it seems that poverty, being the trademark of the blessed one, becomes the means to perpetual happiness. Suddenly, it may seem that all Jesus taught was that *it is enough to be poor to be redeemed*. (Isn't that what John Paul II referred to when he spoke of the Church's preference for the poor?)

Jesus never said that poverty was not something difficult to endure: He praised the ones who labor not to be poor. What He said was, very simply, that sheer wealth must not be a worthy aim in life. (In other words, he praised a simple and frugal society.) But now, poverty becomes a blessing in itself. The poor man hears that the last will be first and that the time has come for him to be first and not last. He hears that the most wretched man, the oppressed and the humiliated, is not to worry about striving for anything, because he already is all that a man should be. He hears that he is the righteous from whom no evil can flow, the bearer of truth who can utter no lie. He hears that, inasmuch as he is humiliated, ignorant, hungry, cold, he cannot go wrong, think untruly, nor want unjustly. He hears that he is a perfection of a man. (Significantly, *perfect* is the word that will be used by some heretics—the Cathars, who thought they had become perfect by shedding all interest in material things—to describe themselves.)

And so Jesus' words about the coming of His Kingdom assume an entirely different meaning, the complete reverse of the true one.

If the poor are redeemed by their very poverty—*i.e.*, by being what they already are—then the revolution they were promised can no longer be the inner one that Jesus preached: What could the poor change themselves into, since they already embody everything that a man can hope to be? If there is to be a revolution, it must be a revolution outside of themselves, in the outside world, not in their own hearts and consciences. Such a revolution will benefit the poor but will not make any demands on them.

Can it be a revolution in the universe, the climate, the resources at hand? Possibly: Has not Yahweh promised His people a land of milk and honey, where bread would be aplenty? But, then, they were the chosen people. The common ones are offered something much simpler and more logical. Since their perfection stems from being deprived of worldly goods, but, at the same time, the society they live in is a society in which they are unhappy because of their poverty, then it is obvious that the promised revolution is that of this world simply turned upside down, a revolution within the society. This is why Jesus can announce that the new kingdom is at hand, because the new world already exists, though in a sort of veiled form. All that is needed is an unveiling, and, since the new world is just the reverse of the old one, this unveiling can very naturally be called a revolution. And a revolution that will change the condition of the poor is a social revolution. (Of course, this social revolution does not really need a god any more to lead it. All the pseudoprophets who appeared as early as the beginning of the fifth century, up to Marx and Lenin in our time, were quick to grasp this conclusion.)

Now, it may be argued that the revolution needed to introduce the new society must aim only at eliminating wealth. Since the poor are the blessed ones, the good society must comprise only those who are able to shed their earthly goods.

This implies that they renounce possessing any and become critical of private property. The trend was so logical that even true Christians espoused it: The monastic movement began toward the end of the Roman Empire, among other reasons, as a reaction against earthly pleasures and the splendor of the Church Herself, which grew in proportion to Her development as a dominant social and political institution. The same process worked within the monastic movement: The successive reformations that gave birth to the different orders were born out of an urge to fight the increasing temporality of the successful monasteries. Of course, there is a world of difference between such heresies as that of Joachim de Fiore or the flagellants or the Cathars and the homilies of St. Francis of Assisi, who derived his asceticism from his exclusive love of God and did not take it as a voucher for salvation. Nonetheless, as long as there still prevailed some remnants of spiritual inspiration, poverty remained among the heretics the path to salvation, and equality through poverty, the sign of brotherhood: We could add to the list of the aforementioned heretics the Beguins' movement and even Campanella's socialist utopia at the beginning of the 17th century.

Socialism, as the ultimate outcome of a spiritual sin, is responsible for the triumph of a kind of man who conceives of his most primitive instincts as irreproachable, whether they be defined as an attraction for pleasure or as a natural propensity to confuse what he is with what it is right for him to be.

This path could only be a dead end, however. Since poverty was not the result of a spiritual conversion but was only understood as the key to Paradise, it could not be taken readily as a permanent way of life. It had to be enforced: The well-known social utopias that flourished at the dawn of the modern age very clearly exemplify the inner contradiction between the idea that the last should be first and the notion that the poor should remain poor. Thomas More in the 16th century, Campanella in the 17th, Abbot Mably in the 18th, together with their ilk, advocated, each in his own right, a society both dedicated to the perfect happiness of the poor in this world and ridden with austere rules and severe regulations (such as uniform clothing and the death penalty for deviants) to create and maintain a total absence of private property among the citizens. How could material austerity really appeal to people who conceived of themselves as suffering from material deprivation? How could even a fair and universal distribution of

poverty spontaneously appear as its complete suppression? If the poor are the blessed ones, they cannot dream of a world in which everyone would be poor; they must dream of a world in which the poor would be rich.

And that is indeed how modern socialism was eventually born, as a vision of an “earthly paradise” in which abundance would reign supreme. As Saint-Simon put it at the beginning of the 19th century, socialism came to be a doctrine dedicated to the well-being of the poor—or to making the poor rich. “Social organization,” he repeated endlessly, “must orient society towards its main goal, which is to provide the maximum possible well-being for those who make up the most numerous and the most miserable part of any society.” It is remarkable that Saint-Simon endeavored to found a new religion, which he very aptly called the “New Christianity” and which, in his mind, was nothing but the finally revealed truth of Christianity. Orthodox Christianity was obviously essentially an effort to trigger an inner revolution in the souls of both the rich and the poor. Saint-Simon was logical: When the material conditions of life are raised to the level of criteria for true happiness, it is only natural that the revolution become a socioeconomic one.

Our modern socialist has understood how silly it is to kill the goose who lays the golden egg, so he lets the eggs hatch, and even encourages their hatching, but then demands his share upon the “scientifically” proved assumption that the rich became rich by exploiting the poor.

A daunting question cannot be evaded: Where can the wealth come from, out of which all the poor will be made rich? Historically, as well as logically, there were three successive answers to this question, which grew in sophistication with the passing centuries.

The first to be put to the test is also the most primitive. If the poor are the redeemed, then does it not follow that the rich are the wicked? If the poor are the good, the rich must be the bad. Again, if the poor had been only people who did not confuse wealth with redemption, the opposition would not have been as severe; once material poverty *per se* equaled redemption, however, there could not be any redeemed among the rich. A decisive step toward socialism was taken when a rich man came to be considered as an evil man merely because he was rich. His riches became the very embodiment of his villainy, villainously acquired, and, to put it in a nutshell, stolen. Thus, there could be no harm in being unjust toward the unjust

and putting a claim on his property. Throughout the Middle Ages, most of the millenarian movements, which had started by extolling poverty, ended up, sooner rather than later, in looting and robbing in the name of justice, and, eventually, in the enjoyment of all possible sensual pleasures and just plain debauchery. (To wit, the Anabaptists of Münster, who eventually reigned only by terror, until they were hanged with the general approval of the people.) The endeavor was nevertheless doomed from the beginning: Even barring the victims’ possible resistance, looting had no future, since the loot would eventually run out.

So there came to be a second wave of socialism. Since the bounty had to be renewed constantly, the cornerstone of society became labor and its organization. There is such a thing as industrial socialism, a species whose evolution started under the guise of utopias, from the 16th century on, and ended with the Soviet workers’ paradise. It consists basically in an attempt to organize the whole society rationally, to maximize the efficiency of individual labor. This involved, of course, the elimination of all nonworking people and all possible exploiters, for which purpose the most obvious means appeared to be the abolition of private property.

However socialistic the project may look, it is definitely labor oriented—so much so, indeed, that one is quickly faced with a sort of military body (Saint-Simon, for instance, has no qualms about referring to “iron regiments of workers”), obeying harsh and detailed rules that hardly evoke the earthly comforts of the Promised Land. It may be that there are no more owners or absentee owners, but obeying the supposedly rational regulations of the demanding managers who have replaced them does not make work any more pleasant. Here, the redeemed ones have found a very dubious salvation, when work replaces the enjoyment of the products of work. And, in any case, why should a perfect being have to sweat and toil? Man was not made for work, claimed Saint-Simon himself.

Hence, the last stage of socialism. Reduced to its essentials, it consists in substituting organized exploitation for haphazard pillaging, while preserving the constant replenishment of the common soup tureen. The socialist in the Middle Ages looted the rich on the claim that the latter were evil, which had the inconvenience of exhausting his supplies. Our modern socialist has understood how silly it is to kill the goose who lays the golden egg, so he lets the eggs hatch, and even encourages their hatching, but then demands his share upon the “scientifically” (Marx was here!) proved assumption that the rich became rich by exploiting the poor. Thus, the poor do not rob the rich any more; they only recover what is theirs. This is the gist of what is usually called social democracy. The system still works today, but it seems obvious that the sheep cannot keep happily producing wool if all they get for it is to be shorn.

Modern socialism, being a craving for wealth without the means to provide it, ends up reverting to what was its starting point: looting, whether overt or in disguise, as in the social-democratic system. But since looting can only be a temporary expedient, modern socialism is facing a hopeless future. Stalin encountered the dilemma in the 1930’s: After exploiting the resurrected kulaks to the point of depriving them of any incentive to work, he was at a dead end, unable to feed his population. It is rather extraordinary that, from then on, communism revived almost spontaneously a form of socialism even more primitive than the looting one. It may be summed up in a sort of strikingly clever tautology. If everybody is poor, then nobody is

rich. This means that, for everybody to be rich, it is enough that everybody be poor. Then, all of a sudden, an extremely ascetic society may be viewed as an opulent one, provided everybody starts making sure that nobody gets any richer than he is.

I can only hope I have suggested enough to make a few conclusions understandable.

What is socialism? Briefly, it seems to me that it is the primeval heresy of Christianity; in one word, it is the sociological form of what the theologians call sin.

Men were created free, with a limitless will that includes the will to do what may be harmful to them. This is why, contrary to popular belief, freedom is not a good thing in itself, but only if it is properly used. Freedom is man's glory, but it is also his weakness. And this is why men have to be educated, whether it be by some supernatural teacher or by those to whom life has taught something (the elders).

The primeval heresy had to be, under the circumstances, not so much the temptation to do whatever may have been forbidden (by nature, experience, God) as pride, the conviction that one can get away with whatever one did, that one knows better, that one has enough knowledge or is able to acquire it anyway—in other words, that one is somehow a self-sufficient creature. But this is precisely what socialism has always taught and has never stopped teaching since it emerged from its original chrysalis, that of a religious heresy, the original misinterpretation of Christ's words. For it stems from the notion that some men—the poor—are actually perfect. (In all socialist movements, there is always a claim of purity that is supposed to be more and more completely fulfilled as one acquires more influence in the movement: The Communist Party boasted it was composed of the purest proletarians among the proletariat, its *avant-garde*.)

With the poor providing from then on a model for all men, what they wish is what all men should also wish. Socialism is therefore responsible for the idea that man's primary worry should be to satisfy all of his possible material needs.

Hence, its second legacy. Because socialism underwrites the notion that, since some men are perfect, these men do not have to be taught anything and are entitled to judge everything from their particular, subjective point of view, socialism is responsible for the spread of barbarity. For barbarity is nothing but an inability to conceive of oneself as capable of betterment, a total acceptance of what one is, whatever that may be, a self-centeredness that prevents any inkling that one could be different from what one is—in other words, a total blindness to the idea that man is supposed to achieve his own humanity, or that some men may be better than others. Socialism, as the ultimate outcome of a spiritual sin, is responsible for the triumph of a kind of man who conceives of his most primitive instincts as totally irreproachable, whether they be defined as an attraction for pleasure or as a natural propensity to confuse what he is with what it is right for him to be. (This is the origin of the Rights of Man.) Socialism is thus responsible for the general decay of true education in formerly Christian societies, as well as of all institutions and values that are its natural props, such as the family. And it is also at the root of a mass culture that values easy accessibility over true learning, immediate satisfaction over intellectual effort, impressions over ideas, general lowering of the standards of taste rather than raising them by education. Socialism is responsible for the confusion of vulgarity with culture.

The third legacy of socialism is the corollary of the second: It brought about a culture of guilt and a culture of resentment, very closely interconnected. How could one of the main themes of socialism, the sanctification of the poor, not take an acute relevance in a society that, overwhelmingly if not exclusively, valued money and wealth? Under the development of economic activities, and their progressive exclusive dominance over all other types of human activity, it looked more and more as if only two kinds (two classes, Marx would say) of people remained: the haves and the have-nots. When the value of wealth predominates, men obviously are ready to do anything to get wealthy, whatever the means, since there is nothing they respect more than wealth. The culture associated with the worship of the golden calf therefore fueled a spectacular updating of the age-old misinterpretation of the traditional Christian teachings. It is only too natural to believe that Jesus

A decisive step toward socialism was taken
when a rich man came to be considered
as an evil man merely because he was rich.

There could be no harm in being unjust
toward the unjust and putting a
claim on his property.

had the relief of the wretched in mind, when the world is enslaved to Mammon, a cult that entails an ever-increasing hostility of man toward man and, therefore, an indifference to the exploitation of man by man. Having lapsed into a radical economic mentality, men have become more than ever unable to understand the words of Jesus in any language but their own. And so, it is not surprising that the ancient heresy has now bred a sense of guilt in the minds of the rich: The Catholic Church Herself, supposedly the bearer and teacher of the Word, has fallen into the socialist trap and, instead of preaching detachment to everyone, has declared the right of the poor to get rich, and the duty of the rich to give up wealth, because it actually belongs to those who are most in need of it. This teaching is doubly unorthodox, because it leads to the confusion of wealth with salvation, but also because it revives the feeling that the poor have nothing to do but wait for the manna to descend upon them. The same logic breeds a growing resentment on the part of the poor. Whatever the rich do, they are evil, whether they resist (and, thus, appear all the more evil) or part with their riches, which makes them appear to be yielding to the feeling that they have no right to them.

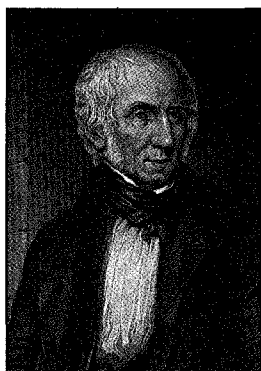
The fourth legacy of socialism is war. How could resentment not breed an encompassing hostility not only between

rich and poor but among the poor themselves? When all pre-existent wealth is exhausted, all that will be left to the poor will be to snatch the crumbs of a long-gone feast from one another's mouths. After taking Peter's throne, and preventing the teaching of detachment, socialism fans the flames of general warfare of all against all, as if it were still to be proved that all heresies end up with man murdering his brother. This means that socialism is also responsible for the death of all feeling of community and friendship between men (which is hardly surprising, since it is the heretical reversal of the religion of love and brotherhood, and materialism always fosters mutual hatred). Wherever socialism triumphs, nations die. But the much-vaunted socialist internationalism amounts to one part of mankind declaring war on the other (which is exactly what Marx called for). This signifies substituting the vague, purely circumstantial, and evasive unity of the poor of this world for the mutual support that nations were supposed to provide to their citizens. True enough, economic liberalism and democratic logic had already undermined their fabric. But socialism is sure to run into the ground what is left of it.

When understood in this way, socialism appears as the real inspiration of radical democracy and, therefore, also as its goal: Radical democracy must be conceived as a step toward the complete fulfillment of the socialist nightmare. Socialism needs democracy, for it needs a political system in which the perfection of man is acknowledged. And this is exactly what is achieved by the notion that every citizen is a sovereign. But socialism ascribes its future to radical democracy, for no man can be both perfect and discontented without attributing his discontent to an exterior cause, without holding some-

thing or someone responsible. But democracy, even a radical one, is rather loath to acknowledge that the sovereignty of one citizen is the worst enemy of the sovereignty of another. So, democracy is useful to socialism, even necessary to its maturing, but only to a point, beyond which it must be transcended as being only formal. It must evolve into a system in which some may be systematically held responsible for the misery and, therefore, for the maintenance of those who will henceforth be declared the only true citizens—the poor. Radical democracy needs socialism to turn the enemy of every citizen's freedom into a source of wealth for every sovereign citizen. As Lenin (almost) said: Socialism is democracy plus electricity.

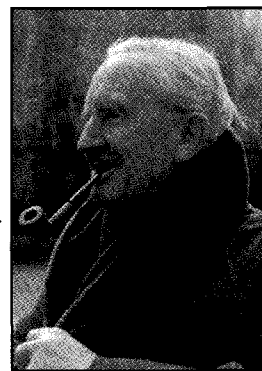
Finally, the American reader should be aware that radical democracy and socialism are logically nigh impossible wherever the opinion holds that men are basically imperfect (if not downright vicious) creatures. Socialism is the hidden cancer that destroys predominantly Catholic societies, because Catholicism is particularly prone to socialism. There is, in Catholicism, a deeply ingrained faith in the possible regeneration of human nature. That some men are doomed is an idea familiar to Saint John, not so much to Saint Thomas, and completely forgotten by contemporary theologians. I cannot help thinking that, even though Calvinism, properly speaking, has waned in the American mentality, and Puritans are an endangered species, Calvin's pessimism about human nature has more or less unconsciously lingered in the recesses of the minds of many Americans and has infused them with a spirit of self-reliance that is the basic antidote to socialism. Whether this spirit will last is another story, which hinges on another question: For how long will true Americans retain the control of their own country? 



THE CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION

English Literature From Wordsworth to Tolkien

The Rockford Institute's Center for the Restoration of Humane Learning is pleased to announce a new distance-learning course taught by literary biographer Joseph Pearce, writer-in-residence at Ave Maria University.



With published biographies of Oscar Wilde, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and others, Mr. Pearce is uniquely qualified to teach this course, which includes 24 lectures and a study guide. The course explores the lives of the giants of 19th- and 20th-century English literature and reveals the eternal Christian truths expressed in their work.

For more information, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811
or e-mail jkooistra@rockfordinstitute.org.



THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE
928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

Price: \$240.00

When ordering, specify ACCIS (audiocassette) or ACCISCD (CD).

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

Marx's and Engels' Illegitimate Offspring

A Nation of Welfare Babies

by David Hartman



Melanie Anderson

If someone is overheard referring to the system of U.S. public finance as “socialist,” most Americans within earshot will write him off as a conservative crank who is being dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century. After all, Karl Marx is long gone, and so is his most ardent American disciple, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, while the worldwide communist movement has collapsed along with the Soviet Union. Socialist confiscation of the tools of production is now passé, and the neocons have led us into the golden age of global capitalism. So what’s the problem?

Fortunately, socialist ownership of the tools of production proved so inefficient that it only served as a placard for selling income confiscation and redistribution to the “have-nots” of the underclass and a few utopian eggheads. However, the fundamental goal of socialism remains unaltered: the ownership of the hearts and minds and souls of mankind by a global world order of socialist states controlled by a self-appointed directorate. Representative democracies have long since been transformed into centralized powers with perpetual incumbents and self-serving bureaucracies, answerable only to the cabal of international financiers and the high priests of the media and academia. In their envisioned global network of states, they are the true parent of the child, the husband of unmarried mothers, the equalizer of wealth (other than that which is controlled by the governing directorate), and the provider of first and last resort. Consummating the union of Marxist doctrine and the modern state through the government-sponsored eradication of the family, religion, and private productive property, they have produced the nuclear individual, who is left with no logical alternative but to depend on the benevolence of government. So, we find that socialism is alive and well, despite the

setbacks caused by communism’s failed attempt to reach the same goal. The possibility of recovering the limited government bequeathed to us by the Founding Fathers has likely long vanished.

The Marxist invasion of American public education, communications, and religion that was launched back in the mid-19th century has enabled a lethal assault on our culture and heritage. But the road to socialism in the United States has also been paved with a fundamental reversal of the nature of public finance and the scale of centralized federal government. The Founding Fathers—particularly Alexander Hamilton—prescribed indirect taxation, primarily through tariffs on imports, which provided limited financing for constitutionally restricted functions of the federal government and protection for the fledgling U.S. manufacturing sector from its more-established competitors. This basis for a limited funding of central government was directly contradicted by the Communist Manifesto, which sought to tax personal income, corporate income, and inheritances. It was Abraham Lincoln who succeeded in adopting this triad of Marxist taxation during the Civil War. (One can only wonder what books were on his nightstand.) Before the end of the war, the Supreme Court found all three of these to be unconstitutional, and the only Lincoln-imposed taxes that survived were excises on spirits and tobacco.

The progressive personal-income tax was the first of the triad to be adopted successfully, as a result of Britain’s frantic efforts to finance the Napoleonic Wars, with five-percent and ten-percent rates. The British income tax yielded such a bountiful harvest that Napoleon was encouraged to adopt a similar tax at even higher rates. After all, progressive income taxation yields far more for the state’s coffers than beheading society’s productive citizens.

As of 1913, total expenditures for federal, state, and local governments in the United States consumed only one twelfth of the output of the U.S. economy. That was the year that the

David Hartman, a retired banker, is chairman of the board of directors of The Rockford Institute.

Progressive Republicans, led by William Howard Taft (a “conservative icon”) and Theodore Roosevelt, adopted the socialist triad, which would not become law until 1916, when the states ratified the 16th Amendment.

At that time, the cost of maintaining the federal government accounted for less than half of total spending on government, mostly for the Post Office and “national defense.” (Perhaps we should say “offense,” since the United States had recently embarked on her Caribbean and Pacific imperial conquests.) The majority of government expenditures were still primarily local and spent on reasonable functions—community schools, roads, hospitals, sanitation, and public protection (police, fire, and health). Welfare (charity) was provided first and foremost by families, followed by religious or other benevolent community organizations or, as a last resort, state and local agencies.

The 16th Amendment enabled socialism, but it was the Great Depression, as handled by Roosevelt, that fundamentally institutionalized socialism here in the United States.

The maximum income-tax rates adopted in 1916 were modest (seven percent on personal income, one percent on corporate income, and ten percent on inheritances) and were only levied on the very rich. Only two years later, however, under Woodrow Wilson, these rates were raised to 77, 6, and 25 percent, respectively, justified under the pretext of financing U.S. entry into World War I. These rates were maintained until the Mellon tax cuts of 1922-25, but, under the confiscations of President Roosevelt and his New Deal, the maximum personal income tax rose to 79 percent; corporate, to 19 percent; and inheritance, to 58 percent, on the eve of World War II.

The 16th Amendment enabled socialism, but it was the Great Depression, as handled by Roosevelt, that fundamentally institutionalized socialism here in the United States. With the Depression came the advent of social insurance, another Marxist doctrine, in the form of Social Security (retirement and disability income), unemployment compensation, and workmen’s compensation (no-fault industrial accidental income and medical coverage). Although Social Security was supposed to be funded by payroll taxes contributed equally by employee and employer and paid into a federal “trust account,” its fiduciary appearance was a mirage. The Treasury has papered the trust fund with federal IOUs, while systematically draining and spending the “deposits” as revenue for current budgets, producing an unstated actuarial liability in excess of the currently stated national debt. This is nothing but intergenerational theft: The contributions of current workers are paid to today’s retirees, not saved for those workers’ retirement. Unemployment and workmen’s compensation also have trust funds, but since the contributions from payroll taxes

and claims are more coincident, they do not represent nearly so serious an actuarial fraud.

Beginning in the states and then developed by the Hoover administration, new welfare programs were designed to offer relief for unemployment and its consequences. But it was FDR who set out to “tax and tax, and spend and spend”—until he was finally stopped by a Democratic Congress when he sought to raise the top personal income-tax rate from 79 to 94 percent in 1938. Still, Congress acquiesced to the 94-percent rate by 1944. Roosevelt understood the powers of government not only to tax and spend but to regulate and to circumvent the law as necessary by putting politicians on the Supreme Court.

Funded by income taxation on wealth and capital, federal-budget outlays hovered at one tenth of U.S. output throughout the Depression. But the onset of World War II required expanding confiscation beyond the wealthy to middle-class workers and families. By criminalizing taxpayers unable to pay their year-end income taxes in 1942, then pardoning them if they would agree to withholding tax from their paychecks, the federal government forced the middle class to join the wealthy as submissive taxpayers.

The World War II years showed that, given sufficient totalitarian urgency, the United States could confiscate over half of national output, principally by the powers of central government. Consequently, the liberal Democrats (not a whole lot more liberal than the Republicans) began to view government as a bottomless cornucopia of welfare goodies and relentlessly conceived one entitlement after another. By 1960, the needy could secure, through local and federal funding, food stamps, surplus commodities, school lunches, HUD-financed housing, and rent supplements; and improvidents could not be turned away from hospitals.

The “Great Society” proposed by John F. Kennedy and implemented by Lyndon B. Johnson was the culmination of a true American socialist welfare state of the Swedish model designed by Alva and Gunnar Myrdal. Medicare was adopted to provide universal hospitalization for the aged, followed by Medicare II supplemental care. Medicaid provided medical care for the poor and lower-middle class who lacked group insurance, as well as for the poorer seniors whom Medicare did not cover. Aid to Dependent Children, a program started by the Social Security act, became Aid to Families With Dependent Children (including single mothers) and was joined by housing, transportation, and child-nutrition allowances. Statistics showed poverty to be greatest among the aged, so half of the welfare benefits were designated for them—at their children’s expense. Social Security and Medicare, together with pensions and other personal resources, created the *individualist aged*, who no longer needed to depend on the care of their children and grandchildren, thus severing the ties between generations.

Welfare-entitlement benefits for unwed motherhood were joined by special benefits from the tax code, including the “head of household” marriage tax-penalty privileges of the Earned Income Tax Credit, daycare credits, tax schedule, and standard exemption. Welfare and tax giveaways combined to create a comfortable underclass living for unwed mothers; consequently, illegitimate births soared to one third of total births, and divorce rates rose to one half of the marriage rate. The socialists’ revenue and spending excesses were depleting the ranks of the hard-working married families who picked

up the tab. Marriage rates and fertility rates within marriage fell below zero population growth for the native population. (President Bill Clinton's "welfare reform" has since required unwed mothers to make reasonable efforts at working for a living, but today, a higher percentage of *married* women with children work.)

As of 2004, according to U.S. government sources, Americans pay 31 percent of their economic output for government. (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, comparing the United States to other countries, puts the figure even higher, at 37 percent.) One third goes to state and local governments, which, apart from national defense, provide most of the government services we require. The rest goes to Washington. Two thirds of all government spending is on welfare entitlements, most of which is spent by Uncle Sam either directly or through funding state programs. This tax burden is shouldered primarily by a decreasing proportion of married-couple families. One half of the funds go to support health and income security for indigent seniors who have separated themselves from assistance in childrearing and community responsibilities. The bulk of the balance goes to unwed mothers. Government funds the rearing of one third of America's children, making Uncle Sam the stepfather of the newborn proletarians of the socialist underclass.

What can help to stop America from continuing down the road toward totalitarian socialism along with the rest of the world? Certainly, a radical change in how we provide and fund social services is essential. Every citizen or family should be required to build a tax-free health- and income-security savings account from which they can draw to provide for their own

retirement and catastrophic medical care and relief and which would replace federal Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other welfare goodies. The tax code should be radically simplified to discontinue any social benefits other than a tax reimbursement on necessities and to tax only consumption, in place of the current system of double taxation, to provide an incentive to save for the future. Far simpler and lower taxes should be the reward for responsible, hard-working families, allowing them to save and spend their own incomes—and deadbeats should be forced to do the same. The consumption taxation should be border adjustable, which would restore competitive terms of trade for American producers; and immigration levels should be limited by a policy that serves Americans' best interests. These policies would help to restore adequate single-worker incomes for families, allowing mothers to stay home, rear their own children, and care for the elderly. Americans want the right to be left alone and to look after themselves. Far too many cannot, since they are not allowed to earn and retain adequate incomes. For far too many, socialist taxation has driven their incomes to subsistence levels.

For those who have become accustomed to thinking of government as Santa Claus, this much must be understood. Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. The presents he gives you, he steals from "other people," after taking a liberal share for himself and his little elves. And you and your children are the "other people." Even if you have not yet been mugged by him directly, he has stolen from you the heritage of a country that was once a great place for all because it was a good place for all—a place that put its confidence in individual, family, and community rather than in the tyrannical confiscation of the centralized socialist state. ©

At Culloden Field

by Peter Hunt

Up here on this high moor today I feel,
Amidst the icy cold and heaps of snow,
Battle-cries and clash of claymore steel
And pounding thunder of the English foe.
When the 'Auld Alliance' bore no fruit
And Murray's timid counsel ruled the day
The half-starved clans had turned to face the brute,
Fat Cumberland's numerous gang who fought for pay.
And Charles, the prince of legend, song and tale
Who mightily strove to win his father's throne,
At last saw that he was doomed to fail
And left the wretched, bloody field alone.
Kilt, clan, pipe and cottage, all went down
That day, with visions of a Scottish crown.

Russia's Demographic Crisis

What Putin Didn't Say

by Wayne Allensworth

On May 10, Russian President Vladimir Putin surprised his audience during his annual address to the Federal Assembly. Most of his hour-long speech had gone as expected: He spoke on economics, technological innovation, and the need to rebuild the country's infrastructure. Then the former KGB officer shifted tack: "And now for the most important thing." After pausing, he asked the audience, "What is the most important thing?"

"Love!" shouted Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov, in an apparently staged exchange.

"I want to talk about love, women, children," Putin agreed. "I want to talk about the family and about Russia's most acute problem today—the demographic problem."

The Russian president went on to outline a three-part program designed to lower mortality rates, attract suitable immigrants from the former Soviet states, and raise birthrates. He described the Soviet-style birthrate program in some detail, offering state subsidies for prenatal care, cash for mothers, and more state subsidies for childcare in state-run kindergartens. Women giving birth to a second child would receive a one-time cash bonus of 250,000 rubles—a substantial amount in a country with an average monthly income of less than 10,000 rubles. Women out of the work force while caring for a newborn (up to 18 months) would be guaranteed 40 percent of their salaries (up to a set ceiling). The Kremlin, awash in petrodollars, was finally taking the demographic disaster seriously, or so most observers thought.

Russia is literally dying; while birthrates have plummeted, death rates have soared, magnifying the demographic problem exponentially. According to U.N. statistics, there are 16 deaths and just 10.6 births per 1,000 Russian citizens annually, leading to a catastrophic population decline of somewhere between 700 and 800,000 per year. If present trends continue, Russia's population will decline from about 140 million today to around 104 million in 2050, with Russia dropping from the 6th-most-populous country to the 17th. Birthrates bottomed out in 1999 at 1.17 births per woman and have increased a bit to 1.34 since, but they are still well below the replacement level of 2.1. Thus, low birthrates are, indeed, a big part of Russia's demographic decline, and economic incentives, as well as attracting educated Russian-speakers from the "near abroad," might help the situation somewhat.

Putin, however, barely mentioned the need to decrease mortality rates, which are particularly high among working-age males. The male life expectancy in Russia now stands at about 59 years, a dismal figure for an industrialized state. (By comparison, French males have a life expectancy of 74.) Rus-

sian mortality rates are similar to those in African states.

There are several reasons for the high mortality rate: Russians are heavy smokers, have a poor healthcare system (only one third of Russian newborns are healthy), and work under dangerous conditions. (A quick read of Russian press reporting on industrial accidents tells the story in horrific detail, let alone the all-too-frequent stories of rail crashes, collapsing buildings, and exploding gas pipelines, all part of the collapse of Russia's infrastructure.) The poorest Russians live well below the poverty line, struggling daily to survive. Russians, in general, have a poor diet. And proverbial Russian fatalism must not be discounted as a factor. For example, any outsider who has had any extended contact with Russians (particularly Russian men) knows of their propensity for reckless driving. (According to the World Bank, about 100 Russians per day die in traffic accidents, about twice the rate of other G-8 countries.) The Russian army has an appalling rate of non-combat-related deaths, even as a guerilla war against Islamic separatists continues in the North Caucasus. Suicide and murder rates are high, as is drug use and the number of Russians with AIDS; 80 percent of those infected with HIV are under 30.

Putin also failed to mention the one factor that likely contributes most of all to Russia's abysmal mortality rate among working-age males: alcoholism. Heavy drinking not only destroys the health of many Russian men but is a contributing factor to the accidents, murders, and suicides that have helped make Russia a demographic black hole. So far, this high death rate has held off a social-welfare crisis: Many Russian men simply do not live long enough to collect a pension, often literally drinking themselves to death. According to researchers Daria Khalturina and Andrei Korotayev, 40,000 Russians die of alcohol poisoning each year. Khalturina and Korotayev estimate that, between 1990 and 2001, alcohol played a role in the deaths of seven million Russians. Russians consume more hard liquor than any other country in the world, with the majority of the booze being vodka and *samogon* (Russian moonshine). The World Health Organization considers a pure alcohol consumption level of eight liters per capita as dangerous. As of the late 90's, Russians were consuming in the range of 13 to 14 liters annually. (A more current estimate is 18 liters!) It has long been said that "Drink is the joy of the Russians," but, before 1917, alcohol consumption among Russians was at one third of today's level.

So why did Putin ignore this elephant in the room? Russian journalist Yulia Latynina has a plausible answer: Commenting on Putin's speech, she noted that the Kremlin is currently shelling out billions of rubles for "national projects." Apart from the birthrate program, there are efforts to boost pensions, teachers' salaries, and the pay of other "budget workers," such as doctors, bureaucrats, and army officers. In fact, there seems to be a

Wayne Allensworth is the author of *The Russian Question* (Rowman & Littlefield).

national project for everything—a clever political move by the Kremlin, which is hoping to boost the fortunes of the dominant political party, United Russia, as well as a Putin successor, as elites prepare for the 2007-08 election cycle. So Putin would not want to do anything as unpopular as embarking on a replay of Mikhail Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign of the 80's. "Gorby's" campaign did have a positive effect, lowering death rates (according to Latynina, the campaign lowered alcohol consumption by 27 percent, while male mortality rates fell by 12 percent), but it also helped to make Gorbachev quite an unpopular figure. Putin is smart enough to remember that.

Putin is also well aware that one of the bastions of the regime's support is the ever-growing state bureaucracy. As Putin's Kremlin has strengthened the "power vertical," expanding the state's reach in the economy and reasserting the prerogatives of the "center" over the regions, the bureaucracy has grown like the proverbial mushrooms after the rain. According to Russian-press sources, the number of state employees grew by ten percent in 2005 alone. Even excluding military and security personnel, the total is currently 1.46 million, or about one bureaucrat for every 100 Russians. Being a bureaucrat, a *chinovnik*, can be a most rewarding occupation: According to sociologists, the amount of money paid in bribes to state officials has soared under Putin, whose image is that of a law-and-order president. One of the things those bureaucrats regulate is the production and sale of alcohol—a source of lucrative bribes and kickbacks.

The Russian Orthodox Church has also played a part in the demographic crisis. In exchange for loyalty to the state, the hierarchs enjoy concessions for importing tobacco and alcohol products on the cheap, reaping profits on the sales of the items that are contributing to the physical destruction of their nominal flock. And, sadly, the term *nominal* is appropriate: A 2000 poll on church attendance and religious belief showed that, while 56 percent of Russians called themselves Orthodox Christians, 31 percent said they were atheists. Only six percent said they go to church more than once per month. (According to the Pew Research Center, 40 percent of Americans say they attend church at least once per week.)

As Putin made clear in his address, fewer and fewer Russian women are having children. Those who do rarely have more than one child. Economic conditions alone cannot explain this. First, wealthier European states are also experiencing a birth dearth. Second, Muslims in Russia tend to avoid self-destructive alcoholism and have higher birthrates than ethnic Russians, despite having concentrations in some of the poorest regions of the Russian Federation. (Latynina reports that the Russian North Caucasian republics of Dagestan and Ingushetia have the highest life expectancy of any in the Russian Federation. At the same time, the republic with the highest birthrate is reportedly Chechnya.)

True, all of the developed nations have birthrates below replacement level, while many Third World countries reproduce at much higher levels. The areas with lower birthrates in Russia tend to be urbanized. Life in the North Caucasus is centered on the village. And the Chechens, Ingush, and other peoples of the region have maintained stronger family and clan ties, which are, in turn, probably related to the more rural and small-town character of the region. At the same time, Islam, as both a religion and an ideology, has experienced a revival in the North Caucasus and among Russia's Muslims in general.

Religious faith among other nationalities has never recovered from 70 years of atheist rule. The lack of religious faith probably helps explain another problem: the prevalence of abortion.

Russian abortion rates are staggering. By most accounts, there are more abortions than live births in Russia. In 2004, at least 1.6 million women had abortions (one fifth of them were under the age of 18, and health officials say many abortions go unreported), while about 1.5 million gave birth. The most common reason given for the stunning number of abortions is that the birth of a second (or even a first) child will push the family (or couple) into poverty. So, again, economic incentives may help to alleviate some of the problem. But, as anyone familiar with Soviet and Russian history knows, in the atheist Soviet Union, abortion became the most common means of contraception. The unbelieving Russian masses were desensitized to the killing of an unborn child, but life under the Soviet dictatorship was always cheap.

Russian abortion rates are staggering. By most accounts, there are more abortions than live births in Russia. In 2004, at least 1.6 million Russian women had abortions.

Yulia Latynina suggests that ethnic Russians may be facing a spiritual and social crisis. She relates a story about a 16-year-old Chechen boy who was preparing to leave his village to join the Chechen insurgents. Fearing death in combat, he insisted on being married first, so that he might leave behind a child to carry on. While Latynina "deeply respected" the boy's rationale, she recognized that such thinking is simply no longer possible for most Russians. The state has destroyed the Russian village and, with it, the family. "It would be funny," she writes, for Putin to "appeal to the traditions of the Russian village community, the *obshchina*," since "it no longer exists, like the Roman legions or the Greek polis."

Latynina speculates that some women in the Russian Federation might follow the "Chechen model" and give birth to and rear children as a matter of course. Such a mother would defend her child with her life. There are two other kinds of mothers in Russia, however, whose ranks, she implies, are far more numerous. Some mothers follow the "Western model" and avoid marriage and family in favor of an "apartment, a car, and work," not even considering children until they have a "house on Rublyevka (a pricey Moscow area boulevard)." And others—those to whom Putin's program would be attractive—are the sort who expect the socialist state to provide for all of their needs. "I don't know what kind of mother she will be," remarked Latynina, "but she will be a good Putin voter."

Putin, who has close ties with the Russian Orthodox Church, said nothing about religious faith or abortion in his Federal Assembly address. As Latynina put it, Russia's demographic crisis is "too serious a subject" to manipulate in "electoral games." ◀

America's Other War

The Deteriorating Situation in Afghanistan

by Ted Galen Carpenter

Americans are understandably concerned about the grave security situation in Iraq. The United States has suffered more than 2,500 fatalities in that conflict and has yet to defeat the insurgency. Indeed, the level of violence in Iraq is increasing, and much of that violence now consists of sectarian bloodshed between Sunnis and Shiites. The American people worry, with good reason, that Iraq might be on the brink of full-scale civil war, with U.S. troops caught in the middle.

Until recently, the mission in Afghanistan seemed to be an impressive contrast to the debacle in Iraq. Even though Washington never deployed troops in Afghanistan in anything close to the numbers it did in Iraq (some 20,000 *versus* the current 133,000 in Iraq), the policy appeared to be a success. U.S. forces, allied with the indigenous Northern Alliance, routed Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in late 2001 with minimal American casualties. Washington helped install a pro-Western government headed by Hamid Karzai, who was acceptable to most of the significant political powerbrokers in Afghanistan. During 2002, political stability appeared to be returning to the country, and Osama bin Laden and his followers were on the run in the Tora Bora mountains. Speculation was rife in Washington that the terrorist leader and most of Al Qaeda's top operatives would soon be captured or killed.

That did not happen. Instead, the U.S.-led military offensive in eastern Afghanistan faded in the last half of 2002 and early 2003. Key units, including a crack unit of Special Forces personnel, were redeployed out of the country at a crucial time. They were sent to Iraq, as the Bush administration geared up for war against Saddam Hussein. In retrospect, that was a major strategic blunder that allowed the Taliban and Al Qaeda to regroup.

And regroup, they have. These terrorists are now inflicting significant casualties on American forces: In 2005, 99 U.S. soldiers were killed, compared with 52 in 2004, 48 in 2003, and a mere 12 in 2001. Fifty-five soldiers have died already in the first five-and-a-half months of 2006—and that is before the surge in fighting that takes place every year during the summer months. Those totals do not include fatalities suffered by other coalition (primarily NATO) forces and Afghan units or civilian casualties, which also are on the rise. Overall, more than 1,600 people perished in insurgent-related violence in 2005—by far the highest annual toll since the war in 2001. More than 1,000 people have been killed so far in 2006.

*Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, is the author of seven books on international affairs and the coauthor of *Exiting Iraq: Why the U.S. Must End the Military Occupation and Renew the War Against Al Qaeda* (2004). He is also a founding member of the *Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy*.*

A report issued in October 2005 by the Center for American Progress warned: "Despite the capture or killing of a number of key Taliban and al Qaeda leaders, as well as coopting some of the leaders into the political process, the insurgency is far from defeated." The report warned further: "The Taliban have become increasingly sophisticated, employing new warfare tactics. They are now using improvised explosive devices and suicide bombs, tactics that appear to have been imported from Iraq." That threat is likely to get worse. Early this year, fugitive Taliban officials claimed that they had recruited some 200 suicide bombers to attack Afghan government and foreign military targets.

An April 2006 report from the Council on Foreign Relations ("Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy") succinctly describes the worrisome security situation:

After years of claiming that greater American and Afghan casualties are either signs of "desperation" by foundering terrorists or the result of more aggressive U.S. tactics that are pushing opposition fighters out of their safe havens, the U.S. government has now admitted that the insurgency is growing and becoming more effective.

Indeed, the definitive victory over Al Qaeda and the Taliban that seemed so tantalizingly close in late 2001 and most of 2002 is in danger of slipping away. The Bush administration has been so preoccupied with the mission in Iraq that it is ignoring a resurgent danger in Afghanistan. Washington's focus has shifted from Osama bin Laden and his allies, who pose a clear and present danger to America, to the will-o'-the-wisp of trying to transform Iraq into a model democracy. Waggish critics of the administration now jibe that Osama bin Laden has become "Osama Bin Forgotten."

The United States needs to refocus her attention on the primary enemy, and that enemy is centered in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, given the reinvigorated insurgency, Washington faces serious obstacles to achieving victory in that country.

In addition to the other problems the United States confronts in Afghanistan, the War on Drugs threatens to interfere with the U.S.-led effort to destroy Al Qaeda and the Taliban. U.S. officials increasingly want to eradicate drugs as well as nurture Afghanistan's embryonic democracy. Under pressure from Washington, Karzai has called upon the Afghan people to wage war against narcotics with the same determination and ferocity with which they resisted the Soviet occupation in the 1980's. Given the economic and social realities in Afghanistan, however, that is an unrealistic and potentially very dangerous objective.

There is little doubt that drug eradication in Afghanistan has become a high priority for Washington. Several fac-

tors account for the Bush administration's concern, but the most important is the fear that drug commerce will corrupt Afghanistan's entire economic and political structure. Robert B. Charles, who just recently left his post as assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law-enforcement affairs, emphasized that point to a congressional committee:

[S]tability in Afghanistan cannot be achieved without addressing the drug issue, and counternarcotics programs cannot be deferred to a later date. Afghanistan is already at risk of its narco-economy leading unintentionally but inexorably to the evolution of a narco-state, with deeply entrenched public corruption and complicity in the drug trade undermining stability, containment of other threats, and all our assistance programs.

Just before moving from ambassador to Afghanistan to his current position as ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad also warned: "The narcotics trade poses a mortal threat to Afghanistan. Narcotics pose a threat to Afghanistan's political future: drug dealers could take over the political system. Narcotics poses a threat to the economy: criminal gangs and mafia can bring the economy under their control."

In addition to the general problem of corruption caused by drug money, U.S. officials are deeply concerned that the opium trade could provide a lucrative source of revenue for the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other enemies of the United States. Charles noted that the drug trade had helped the Taliban regime stay in power during the late 1990's. Indeed, the DEA estimated that the Taliban collected more than \$40 million per year in profits from the opium trade, with some of the cash going to terrorist groups that operated out of that country. Today, according to Charles, "there are strong indications that these heroin drug profits provide funds, to varying degrees, to Taliban remnants, al Qaeda, destabilizing regional warlords, and other terrorist and extremist elements in the region."

In early May 2006, a U.S. official in Afghanistan, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the *Washington Post*:

Drug trafficking is a threat to the security and very future of Afghanistan. It is a narco economy but not yet a narco state. If we lose Afghanistan to this thing, which we could, once again we would have a fertile breeding ground for the next Taliban, the next Al Qaeda, the fundamentalists who thrive in unstable conditions.

Yet Washington faces a serious dilemma if it conducts a vigorous drug-eradication campaign in Afghanistan in an effort to dry up the funds flowing to Al Qaeda and the Taliban, because these are clearly not the only factions involved in drug trafficking. Many of Karzai's political allies are warlords who control the drug trade in their respective regions. They use the revenues from that trade to pay the militias that keep them in power in their fiefdoms and give them national political clout. Some of them backed the Taliban when that faction was in power, switching sides only when the United States launched her military offensive in Afghanistan in October 2001. There is a serious risk that antidrug measures might cause them to change their allegiance yet again. Even the *Washington Times*, which strongly favors the War on Drugs, conceded that "a number of heavily armed Tajik tribal lead-

ers that have not been hostile to U.S. forces could lash out if their drug interests are directly and aggressively challenged." In addition to the need to placate cooperative warlords, the U.S.-led coalition secretly relies on opium-poppy growers as informants on movements of Taliban remnants and Al Qaeda units. Disrupting the opium crop might alienate those crucial sources of information.

According to the United Nations, there are more than 350,000 Afghan families involved in opium-poppy cultivation. Even measured on a nuclear-family basis, that translates into roughly 2.3 million people—about ten percent of Afghanistan's population. Given the role of extended families and clans in Afghan society, the number of people affected is much greater than that. Indeed, it is likely that at least 30 percent of the population is involved directly or indirectly in the drug trade. For many of those people, opium-poppy crops and other aspects of drug commerce are the difference between modest prosperity and destitution. They will not look kindly on efforts to destroy their livelihood.

The definitive victory over Al Qaeda and the Taliban that seemed so close in late 2001 and most of 2002 is in danger of slipping away. The President has been so preoccupied with his mission in Iraq that he is ignoring a resurgent danger in Afghanistan.

Afghan government officials have tried to make their American patrons understand the extreme sensitivity of pursuing antidrug efforts directed at poppy farmers. "To take away the livelihood of farmers could be dangerous in some parts of Afghanistan," warned the country's counternarcotics minister. That danger is especially acute with regard to the ethnic Pashtun farmers in southern and eastern Afghanistan, the core of Karzai's political constituency. As one Western diplomat in Afghanistan told Reuters, "If he bulldozes in and destroys crops, if he arrests and punishes farmers, they're definitely going to think that the Taliban have [a] point when they say the government is bad."

Nevertheless, the U.S. government is putting increased pressure on Karzai to crack down on the drug trade. The Afghan regime is responding cautiously, trying to convince Washington that it is serious about dealing with the problem without launching an antidrug campaign that might alienate large segments of the population. It has tried to achieve that balance by focusing on high-profile raids against drug-processing labs—mostly those that are not controlled by warlords friendly to the government in Kabul. For example, on the eve of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit in March 2005, Afghan

counternarcotics squads destroyed several drug laboratories and confiscated more than two tons of opium in raids in the eastern province of Nangarhar. The timing of the raids was probably designed to make a favorable impression on Rice. "This successful operation shows that the government of Afghanistan is serious about ridding our country of drugs," Gen. Sayed Kamal Sadat, the head of the counternarcotics police, emphasized in a statement to the press.

Although Afghan officials have been receptive to U.S. prodding to pursue interdiction initiatives and have been enthusiastic about the prospect of developmental aid for crop substitution and alternative development projects, they have been less responsive to another U.S. goal: crop eradication. The Karzai government has especially resisted the aerial spraying of poppy fields—a strategy that Washington has successfully pushed allied governments in Colombia and other South American countries to adopt.

bust units. In those hostile areas, the writ of the Kabul government (or, as is more often the case, the writ of friendly warlords loyal to Karzai) is no longer taken seriously.

In short, the security environment in Afghanistan is beginning to resemble that of Iraq. The United States may well have missed a crucial window of opportunity in late 2002 and early 2003 to administer a crushing blow to the Al-Qaeda-Taliban alliance. If the Bush administration had not diverted crucial military resources, especially Special Forces personnel, from the Afghan theater to Iraq, that definitive victory might have been secured. Unfortunately, we will never know for certain. What we do know is that we now face a revitalized, resilient, and increasingly dangerous adversary.

Moreover, it is not clear that the policy options available to Washington with regard to Iraq are available with regard to Afghanistan. Iraq was a needless diversion in the war against radical Islamic terrorists. For all of his evil qualities, Saddam Hussein was a conventional, secular tyrant who loathed the radicals and was determined to keep them out of his country. To the extent that Iraq has become a magnet for Islamic extremists, it is the result of an ill-advised U.S. invasion and occupation that destabilized the country. Even so, most Iraqis dislike the foreign fighters and would likely kill or expel them once the unpopular U.S. occupation ends. Iraq was not and is not crucial to the security of the United States. We can and should withdraw our forces as quickly as possible.

The situation in Afghanistan is different. The enemy we face there is the organization that attacked us on September 11 and the Taliban ally that gave that organization a safe haven. If we withdraw precipitously, there is a very real danger that Al Qaeda and the Taliban could regain power and again constitute a mortal peril to the United States. American forces cannot leave Afghanistan until the enemy units are defeated utterly or at least weakened to the point that they pose only a minor threat to America's security. That means that vigorous military operations must continue in Afghanistan—and in the border areas of Pakistan in which insurgent units often take cover.

Washington needs to make some difficult choices to achieve victory. One requirement is to de-emphasize counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. It is clear that vigorously pursuing that goal antagonizes major portions of the population and plays into the hands of the insurgents. Unless a specific antitrafficking initiative has a direct bearing on denying funding to Al Qaeda or the Taliban, antidrug objectives need to be put on the back burner.

U.S. leaders also may need to consider an option that is likely to be unpopular with the American people. Defeating the Afghan insurgents may require a modest increase in the number of U.S. troops over the short term. At the moment, guerrilla fighters have too many safe havens in the Afghan-Pakistan border region. They are using those sanctuaries to prepare for and mount attacks elsewhere in the country. If more American forces are needed to regain the military initiative that was lost in late 2002 and early 2003, it is a step that should be taken.

Unfortunately, because of the Bush administration's obsession with going to war against Iraq, an opportunity to score a decisive, low-cost victory in Afghanistan may have been squandered. In the coming months, and perhaps years, that victory will have to be secured at greater cost in terms of both blood and treasure. It is yet another U.S.-policy failure that should have been avoided. 

Many of Karzai's political allies are warlords who control the drug trade in their respective regions. They use the revenues from that trade to pay the militias that keep them in power in their fiefdoms.

Yet even the limited measures that Kabul has taken against the drug trade appear to be a factor in the increased public support for the Taliban, especially in southern Afghanistan. Since the government launched a campaign in March 2006 to eradicate some poppy fields manually (which is far less efficient than aerial spraying) in the southern Afghan province of Helmand (the center of the drug trade), the level of violence there has spiked. Drug traffickers have formed alliances with Taliban and Al Qaeda units to sabotage the eradication program and undermine Kabul's overall authority. U.S., British, and Canadian troops in the province have come under repeated attack. Roadside bombs have blown up military vehicles, and both Afghan government offices and the local U.S. military base have been subjected to bombings.

There is no question that the drug war is a major complication in Washington's broader strategy of defeating the insurgency. This is a case in which U.S. officials need to establish priorities, because it will be extraordinarily difficult to achieve both objectives.

Developments in Afghanistan over the past year suggest that the victory over Al Qaeda and the Taliban that seemed imminent in 2002 is slipping away. Insurgent units mount a growing number of mortar, rocket, car-bomb, and suicide attacks on U.S., NATO, and Afghan government targets. Moreover, they seem to be increasingly sophisticated and lethal in their attacks. There are portions of the country, especially in the south, where U.S. forces rarely venture except in sizable, ro-

Right Deserves Might

by Daniel McCarthy

"A combination of St. Paul and St. Vitus."

—Ascribed to John Morley

Theodore Roosevelt and World Order

by James R. Holmes
Dulles, VA: Potomac Books;
327 pp., \$29.95

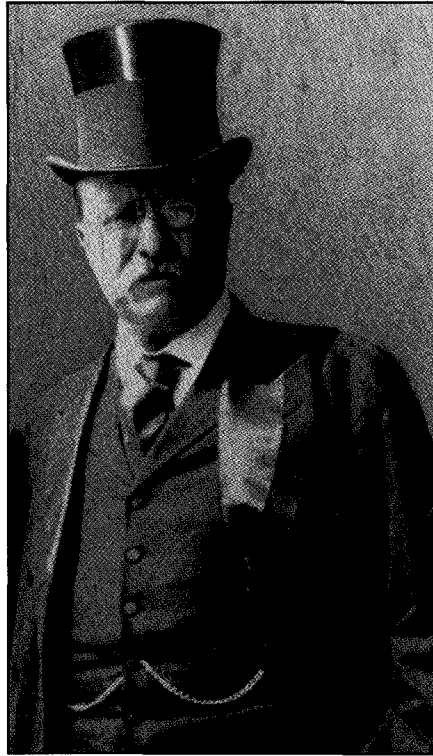
When Trumpets Call: Theodore Roosevelt After the White House

by Patricia O'Toole
New York: Simon & Schuster;
495 pp., \$30.00

The world could use a few more volumes devoted to Grover Cleveland; it has little need for more books about Theodore Roosevelt. But if more there must be, at least the two under consideration here explore terrain not yet strip-mined. Patricia O'Toole begins her biography at the point where most encomiasts of the Rough Rider lose interest, with his departure from the White House in 1909. James R. Holmes argues—with limited success—that Roosevelt articulated a special understanding of international police power in his letters, speeches, and acts, both as president and before. Each book, authorial intent notwithstanding, shows why Roosevelt, who possessed some real virtues, was nonetheless a man whose vision of government, and of foreign policy in particular, was even more pernicious than that of Woodrow Wilson.

O'Toole's book, the more accessible of the two, opens with the aftermath of the 1908 election, which had posed a

Daniel McCarthy is literary editor of the American Conservative.



Melanie Anderson

quandary for Roosevelt. Had he wanted to run for reelection, he almost certainly could have won. But he had already served nearly eight years in the White House, and to run again would be in breach of the spirit of Washington's two-term precedent.

Instead, Roosevelt helped his friend and secretary of war, William Howard Taft, succeed him in office, then withdrew from public life, lest his exuberance and energy overshadow the new president. On March 23, 1909, not three weeks after Taft's inauguration, Roosevelt set off on an African safari (backed by the Smithsonian Institution), which would allow him to play scientific adventurer.

O'Toole describes Roosevelt, with all his vim and energy, as boyish, possessed of "qualities rarely found in persons over the age of eight." She never uses the words *immature* or *adolescent*, but, in a sense, Roosevelt was the first

of our boy presidents. No man was ever as unsuited to the life of contemplation or gentlemanly leisure. He read voraciously, more than any president since Jefferson; he took with him on safari pigskin-bound volumes of Homer, Euripides, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Dickens, Twain, and more. But reading—and writing, of which TR also did a great deal—is not the same thing as reflection.

Roosevelt reared four brave sons and two spirited daughters. In 1911, he wrote to his son Ted,

I have heartily enjoyed many things; the presidency, my success as a soldier, a writer, a big game hunter and explorer; but all of them put together are not for one moment to be weighed in the balance when compared with the joy I have known with your mother and all of you.

Yet domesticity no more fulfilled him than did the life of the mind: For all his adult qualities, Roosevelt had an adolescent's craving for action—political action, above all.

Returning from safari in 1910, Roosevelt succumbed to the urge to meddle in midterm elections, a prelude to seeking the presidency again in 1912. He discovered several pretexts for returning to politics and undermining Taft. The President was too soft on business interests—even though Taft busted more trusts than Roosevelt had ever done. Taft was a poor steward of public resources; he had fired U.S. Forest Service head Gif-

ford Pinchot for speaking out to Congress about a suspicious sale of public land to Morgan interests. And Taft had soft-headed views on foreign policy and too much faith in the potential for international arbitration treaties to avert war.

Roosevelt was not alone in his dissatisfaction with President Taft. The Republican Party was bitterly divided between progressive "Insurgents"—critical of Taft, staunchly opposed to the tariff, and personified by Wisconsin Sen. Robert M. La Follette—and "Regulars" such as Roosevelt's friend Henry Cabot Lodge. TR was as skeptical of the Insurgents' leaders—"narrow fanatics, wild visionaries and self-seeking demagogues"—as he was of Taft. The only statesman he trusted to steer a middle course between socialism and capitalist excess was, naturally, himself.

Biding his time until 1912, Roosevelt stumped for Insurgent candidates in 1910. In Osawatimie, Kansas, TR unveiled what he (or rather his speechwriters, borrowing a phrase from Herbert Croly) called the "New Nationalism." "Every man holds his property subject to the general right of the community to regulate its use to whatever degree the public welfare may require," he told his listeners, enumerating a program including demands for a graduated income tax and other levies aimed at the rich, social insurance and workmen's compensation, and a military buildup. Roosevelt wasn't one to scruple over the constitutional problems these desiderata might pose.

After midterm gains, the Insurgents reverted to calling themselves progressives and laid plans to deny Taft the Republican nomination in 1912. Roosevelt kept aloof from this effort, at least at first, claiming to have no interest in running and to be concerned only for the good of the party. He set his ambitions on other sights in the near term: When war with Mexico seemed in prospect early in 1911, he offered to raise a volunteer regiment and charge up the next San Juan hill. Taft wouldn't start the war, however, and he continued to pursue arbitration agreements with France and Britain that Roosevelt adamantly opposed.

Seeking the nomination was something Roosevelt told himself he simply had to do: What he couldn't accept as a privilege he readily embraced as a duty. La Follette was too radical; Taft, too weak. His party and his country needed him. More than a few of his country-

men and fellow Republicans wanted him as well. Roosevelt won a majority of delegates to the Republican National Convention from states that held primaries.

Unfortunately for him, as O'Toole notes, "Two-thirds of the convention's delegates came from states without primaries," and they were overwhelmingly for Taft. Roosevelt's supporters put up a fight, challenging Taft delegates' credentials. There was little substance to their charges of impropriety, but the appearance gave Roosevelt a pretext for denouncing the convention. Several members of the Michigan delegation offered to break away from Taft and help Roosevelt win the nomination, if he would support a compromise candidate in the first round of voting. Roosevelt vehemently refused.

His campaign secretary, O.K. Davis, thought this refusal proved Roosevelt was not interested in personal advancement. O'Toole suggests otherwise: "TR's rejection can also be taken as one more sign that he did not want the nomination as much as he wanted to bolt." On the last night of the convention, as the Republicans renominated Taft, Roosevelt assembled his delegates in a nearby venue and declared his intention to battle on; there, in Chicago's Orchestra Hall, he was "nominated to lead a party that didn't yet exist." O'Toole's chapter on this episode is one of the most colorful in the book, and notable for the critical judgment she ventures on her subject. TR's antics at the Republican convention would try even a more sympathetic biographer than O'Toole.

Two months later, Roosevelt and his supporters returned to Chicago—to the Coliseum, the very place where Taft had bested Roosevelt—for the Progressive Party convention. Roosevelt had spent the interval building up the party, campaigning so intensely—with "flailing arms, rising voice, and reddening face"—that rumors flew of heavy drinking. (Henry Adams quipped that Roosevelt was only drunk on himself.) The party's ranks consisted largely of ex-Republicans; *Emporia Gazette* editor William Allen White described them as "successful middle-class country-town citizens, the farmer whose barn was painted, the well-paid railroad engineer, and the country editor." The Progressive Party's platform melded the interests of organized labor with bourgeois concerns for uplift: women's suffrage, a living wage, abolition of the seven-day work week and child la-

bor, plus the measures TR had called for in Osawatimie. This blueprint for a "pro-family" welfare state (as well as Roosevelt's longtime rhetorical championing of large families) has earned him the admiration of some latter-day conservatives, notably Allan Carlson. However, the eventual enactment of most of the Progressive Party's platform did not lead for long to a country notably secure in its families. The scientific and bureaucratic expertise in which Roosevelt always put great faith would later be put to uses that would have horrified him.

Although every major candidate touted his progressivism, the 1912 presidential election presented the country with Taft as the moderate conservative, Woodrow Wilson posing as a Jeffersonian decentralist, and the big-government nationalism of Roosevelt. In O'Toole's words, when Wilson argued "that the history of liberty was a history of limiting the powers of government, Roosevelt parried that the history of public welfare was the history of increasing governmental power." The outcome was never in any doubt: Taft was resigned to defeat; Roosevelt and the Progressives fought on without a hope in the world. Only a failed assassination attempt on Roosevelt, which created the possibility of a sympathy vote, added drama to the race.

Roosevelt's vanity created the Progressive Party and would destroy it before long. He still wanted to be president, and it was clear that the Progressive Party presented no means to that end. His efforts on the Progressives' behalf in the 1914 elections were desultory. That fall, with war under way in Europe, he was more interested in clamoring for preparedness and denouncing "ultrapacifists" who "cry continually for peace and not at all for righteousness." And he berated Wilson for failing to avenge Belgium.

Although Roosevelt took to journalistic jingoism, he was willing—indeed eager—to do some fighting himself, unlike today's laptop bombardiers. He was eager, too, that every man should have a hand in the war: "I no more believe in permitting a man to volunteer to stay at home or refuse to enlist in time of war than I believe in permitting him to volunteer not to pay his taxes in time of peace."

Roosevelt wanted the 1916 Republican nomination, but, having bolted the party and knowing he needed the support of the bosses to win, he was in no position to campaign openly for it. He declined the Progressives' nomination and supported

the Republican nominee (he had 1920 to look toward), Charles Evans Hughes, the war candidate in the race with Wilson, who had “kept us out of war,” though that year Wilson sent forces into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa. Roosevelt once again sought a commission, and, once again, he didn’t get it. Hughes, for his part, used the Villa episode to argue for greater interventionism.

But voters chose Wilson and—they thought—peace. Five months later, the country entered the European conflict. In addressing Congress to call for a declaration of war (quaint, that), Wilson sounded a Rooseveltian note: “the right is more precious than peace . . .”

Roosevelt’s four sons all went to war. TR’s only regret was that he could not go himself. From the sidelines, he continued to demand greater determination—from his countrymen and president alike—in prosecuting the war. “In his judgment,” O’Toole writes,

teachers should be made to sign loyalty oaths, and police should be used to disperse crowds listening to the soapbox purveyors of “veiled treason.” He wanted cases of sedition heard by military tribunals . . .

Three of his sons survived. Quentin, the bright boy who, at the age of 10, had compared his sunburned legs to a Turner sunset (owing, possibly, to Henry Adams’ influence), was shot down over enemy territory at the age of 20. Roosevelt outlived the war by less than two months: He died on January 6, 1919, of a coronary embolism. But his program—the welfare state at home, interventionism abroad—lived on in Wilson’s administration and later in that of cousin Franklin, whose *libido dominandi* outstripped even Theodore’s, and who had no qualms about overturning precedents set by George Washington.

All of this is ably related by Patricia O’Toole with hardly a jot or tittle of critical interpretation. Her book is a straightforward pop-history narrative, albeit one with a bedrock of original scholarship. She has, for example, uncovered new material about Roosevelt’s troubled relationship with Taft (and Taft’s troubles with his health) from the letters of Archie Butt, an Army officer who served in the White House under both men. Those looking for a painstaking evaluation of what TR’s sound and fury signified for the country,

however, will have to search elsewhere.

Intrepid souls might try *Theodore Roosevelt and World Order*, a very different sort of book, aimed at foreign-policy wonks. It has a major defect: While O’Toole’s book advances no thesis at all, Holmes argues persuasively for a very meager one. He shows that Roosevelt developed a doctrine of “international police power,” defined in part as “the quasi-legal authority Roosevelt invoked to justify diplomatic action in certain circumstances.”

Holmes investigates “what constituted ‘chronic wrongdoing’ and ‘impotence’” in the context of nations targeted for intervention under the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine; whether the international police power was something only America possessed (in short, no); the legal and policy status of the power; and whether the modified Monroe Doctrine forbade U.S. intervention outside the Western Hemisphere (no, again). Answers to these inquiries, he suggests, may be useful in analyzing latter-day interventionism.

The contemporary relevance of his research is not something Holmes emphasizes, however. In his last chapter, he concludes that, whatever its value as an analytic tool, Roosevelt’s notion of police power has little application today. Holmes’ other lines of research are pursued more methodically: By far the longest of his chapters is devoted to case studies of the major U.S. interventions (diplomatic and military) during Roosevelt’s time as assistant secretary of the Navy and as president—in the Philippines, Cuba, Venezuela, Panama, Santo Domingo, and Morocco.

Just as Roosevelt believed in strong government at home to regulate business and mediate disputes between labor and capital, he saw a need for the United States—and other great powers—to guarantee world order, both between states and within the less-advanced ones. Colonization could thus be a positive good, though, in the case of the United States, what might otherwise be called colonization was really something else—republicanization (which we now call democratization). The United States took control of Hawaii and the Philippines in the name of self-government. Roosevelt cannily argued that the spreading of republican values and institutions was a long-established American policy: Hadn’t Jefferson acquired the Louisiana Territory without asking its inhabitants’ permission?

Order had to come from somewhere, and, if a nation could not (yet) govern itself, a greater power must do the governing. Within this broad framework, Roosevelt acknowledged practical restraints, and he avoided direct use of force whenever he could—as Holmes says, “American troops never fired a shot in anger in any constabulary mission during the Roosevelt presidency, with the sanguinary exception of the Philippine War.” He succeeded in imposing his authority—America’s authority—on Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Venezuela without violence. But, despite the limited means Roosevelt employed, the ends of his police-powers doctrine were vast.

And his idea was pregnant with potential for great-power conflict. Just as the Roosevelt Corollary insisted that the United States step in to bring order to unruly Latin American states whose debts might provoke European powers to annex them, so Roosevelt saw occupying the Philippines as necessary to forestall a German occupation—which would have given the kaiser a base from which to menace China’s markets. In the Philippines, Roosevelt’s idea of international police power could provide a useful cloak for the pursuit of base self-interest.

Holmes acknowledges that Roosevelt did not, in fact, consistently abide by his own strictures regarding this power. Certainly in practice, self-interest trumped constabulary duties—as when the United States, rather than fulfilling her treaty obligation to provide security on the isthmus of Panama for the Colombian government, recognized the breakaway province and prevented Colombia from stopping the secession. Even in his more ostensibly benign interventions, was it really order—economic stability, self-government, *etc.*—that Roosevelt aimed at sustaining, or American power? “One of Roosevelt’s least appealing traits, his willingness to disregard ‘technicalities’ for a higher purpose, was in full view during the Panama affair,” Holmes writes. But perhaps there was always a “higher purpose” behind Roosevelt’s idea of international police power.

Holmes’ book is more interesting for its evidence than for its argument. Here we have an account of the nation’s transformation from continental power to global empire—an empire of republican and democratic values, of course. Roosevelt, who always believed that right deserved might, played a pivotal role in bringing about that transformation. 

Republican Rapture

by Jack Trotter

American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century

by Kevin Phillips

New York: Viking Penguin;
480 pp., \$26.95



Kevin Phillips' *American Theocracy* is divided into three parts held together, at times, only by the most tenuous of rhetorical threads. The first deals with the perilous politics of Big Oil and American imperial overreach; the third, with the looming threat to American prosperity represented by out-of-control national debt and what Phillips calls the "financialization of the United States." Both of these sections of the book present some compelling, if familiar, arguments. It is, however, the middle section, "Too Many Preachers," that has catapulted it to the top of the best-seller lists. Here, Phillips reveals his central concern or, rather, obsession: Under the leadership of a third-rate Cromwell, George W. Bush, the Republican Party has been transformed and radicalized by a New Model Army of Southern Baptist activists with the result that the American nation threatens to become a theocratic regime. Of course, this, too, is hardly an original claim; heretofore, however, we have heard it preached largely from the precincts of the theophobic secular left. To hear the same argument from Mr. Phillips, the erstwhile populist prognosticator of emerging Republican majorities—well, that would seem to be the oracular equivalent of the FDA Seal of Approval. Once upon a time, he embraced the hog-fed, Bible-thumping, stock-car lovin' multitudes of Dixie and welcomed them into the big Republican tent. Now, gazing upon the American scene from his well-appointed study in Litchfield, Connecticut, he is appalled by the result.

The central argument unfolds as follows: Unperceived back in the late 60's by Republican *cognoscenti* such as Phillips, a third Great Awakening of fundamentalist religious fervor was quietly on the rise. At first, this revolt of the masses, which led to increasingly larger Republican sweeps of formerly Democratic strongholds, seemed acceptably "secular" in na-

ture—initially a surge of populist resentment against the Democratic elites who were, for example, running roughshod over the sentiments of local communities and busing white children to distant schools in the name of racial equality. Even after the Reagan landslide offered irrefutable proof that the Democrats had lost Middle America and that a major new political alignment was a *fait accompli*—even then, despite the troubling and inarticulate noises made by something called the "Moral Majority," almost no one in the respectable media or in liberal academe recognized the looming threat for what it was. After all, Ronald Reagan wasn't much of a churchgoer (and Nancy dabbled in astrology); and the media, the academy, the courts, and the federal bureaucracy were all firmly in the hands of secularists. Jerry Falwell was a clown, one who must be put in his place, but he was not a serious threat to the Wall of Separation that could be depended upon to keep the religious vandals out of the secular parlor. The so-called Culture Wars seemed to be about something Phillips calls "social values," not about theology. Only with the election of George W. Bush, a self-proclaimed "born-again" Southern Baptist, and the appearance of "Bibles being brandished as public policy guides" by the likes of John Ashcroft—only then did the secular elites begin to grow seriously alarmed at the possibility of a "theocratic" takeover of key American institutions. And, in Phillips' considered view, they were and are right to be alarmed. In the Preface, he claims that

strong theocratic pressures are already visible in the Republican national coalition and its leadership, while the substantial portion of Christian America committed to theories of Armageddon and the inerrancy of the Bible has already made the GOP into America's first religious party.

Wedded to this argument is the further claim that the rise of a fundamentalist-dominated GOP is part and parcel of the historical emergence of the Southern Baptist Convention (and its "sectarian" brethren: the Pentecostals, the Mormons, *et al.*) as the predominant expression of American religious populism. Phillips provides an admirably succinct overview of the growth of the Southern Baptists since the Civil War. Both during and after Reconstruction, according to this

analysis, the Southern Baptists embraced the Lost Cause of the Confederacy with a fervor akin to that of no other Southern denomination, snatching victory from the jaws of ignominy and defeat by a "postwar theology that reconciled defeat with the will of God and Confederate righteousness." By the end of the century, they had "achieved a hegemonic position within the South," their numbers growing steadily as they siphoned off membership from the less-aggressive mainline Methodists and Presbyterians.

Despite the setback presented by the Scopes trial and the subsequent ridicule of fundamentalist belief that became commonplace across much of the nation, the Southern Baptists and other "radical" Protestant sects (most of them Southern in origin) continued quietly to expand. Between 1940 and 1960, the Southern Baptists' numbers doubled from 10 million to 20 as their leadership focused on evangelism and remained politically quiescent (for the most part). The turn toward a more aggressive political activism, in Phillips' view, may have been in 1979, when the "moderate" wing of the Convention was effectively purged. By the end of the Reagan years, the "Church of the Southern Cultural Memory" was on its way to becoming a newly fledged Church of Biblical Inerrancy and Republican Ascendancy." One must also note a significant demographic shift. Though the original states of the Confederacy remain the bastion of Southern Baptist and other fundamentalist churches, the second half of the 20th century saw their expansion well beyond the Mason-Dixon line into the Midwest and the West—in short, into most of the states now designated as "red" by pollsters. Phillips argues that this expansion coincides with, and is in part responsible for, the Dixiefication of Middle America. He effectively demonstrates how this demographic spillover of the fundamentalist ranks was seized upon by Republican strategists to shape the electoral majorities that elected Ronald Reagan, the Bushes, and the current Republican majorities in the House and Senate. This confluence of expansionist fundamentalism and Republican ambition has resulted in a political party driven by a theocratic worldview shaped by Old Testament morality and end-times prophecy, especially as articulated for the born-again masses in such blockbuster best-sellers as the *Left Behind* series and its premillennialist visions of imminent Rapture.

While Phillips' historical account of

the rise of the Religious Right is generally accurate, the conclusions he draws are flawed. We may begin with the claim that the GOP has become America's "first religious party." Let us assume for the moment that the Republican Party really has become the political instrument of a cabal of preachers and blindly obedient born-again activists. Would this, in fact, be unprecedented in American history? It is curious that Phillips says virtually nothing about the Abolitionists and their role—under the leadership of the Northern Baptist William Lloyd Garrison—in the formation of the Republicans as the antislavery party. Most historians would agree that abolitionism was, in large part, the result of the crusading moral fervor generated by the Second Great Awakening, and it is well known that Garrison himself repeatedly invoked divine sanction for his radical agenda. True, Lincoln did not, like George W. Bush, host Bible studies in the White House, but it is certainly arguable that the religious Abolitionists were the driving force in the original incarnation of the Grand Old Party.

In truth, however, the Republicans today are not a "religious party." Though the religious right is an important part of the Republican electoral base, and has been enthusiastic in support of the Iraqi venture (until recently), the real power brokers in the White House and in the party generally have been the neoconservatives, about whom Phillips has virtually nothing to say. Most of these men (and women) are, by all appearances, driven almost exclusively by "secular" concerns. Of course, their influence has been most evident in the crafting of foreign and military policy. On the domestic front, the power of the Religious Right has been more evident; even here, however, its agenda has been pursued by Republican leaders in lukewarm and sporadic fashion at best.

Another problem with Phillips' argument is that he fails to define his key terms adequately. "Theocracy," for example, is not defined until halfway through the book, and then only briefly as "some degree of rule by religion." That's impossibly vague and allows for so wide a range of interpretation that the term becomes virtually meaningless. And then there is Phillips' understanding of the separation of Church and state. He uses the Jeffersonian phrase "Wall of Separation" as though it were enshrined in the Constitution, though he well knows that it isn't. Republican attempts to chip away at ex-

isting abortion law, to impose Intelligent Design instruction upon public-school curricula, to prohibit "gay marriage"—all of these and more Phillips regards as threats to the separation of Church and state as intended, he implies, by our deist forefathers, who would no doubt be card-carrying members of the ACLU if they were alive today. In fact, Phillips never once attempts a serious discussion of what the Framers intended on this vital point. He does not even acknowledge that the issue (where to draw the line, what the Framers intended) might be debatable.

All of this imprecision and evasion suggests that Phillips isn't really attempting to persuade. He is, rather, preaching to the choir. Had this so-called populist any sympathy at all for the simple faith of the millions of Americans who make up the rank-and-file of the Religious Right, he might have told a very different and more interesting story. He might have provided some insight into the hijacking of that faith by a globalist neoconservative elite for whom the American nation is little more than a vast reservoir of bodies, blood, and tax revenue to fuel the spread of democratic capitalism over the face of the earth. This is not to say that many of the leaders of the Religious Right have not been complicit in these imperialist designs (as Phillips notes), but they are at best second-stringers in a party that has long since abandoned all but the pretense of "allegiance to the flag . . . and to the Republic for which it stands."

Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

Decline Without Fall

by Srdja Trifkovic

**Mullahs, Merchants and Militants:
The Economic Collapse of the Arab
World**

by Stephen Glain
New York: Thomas Dunne Books;
343 pp., \$15.95



Stephen Glain, a former Middle East correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, joins a long list of journalists, pundits, and think-tank analysts who have endeavored, since the World Trade Center attacks, to help America under-

stand the Arab world. In his first (and, so far, only) book, he argues that the relationship between economics and political stability in the region has been neglected for too long in Washington. He blames the "Beltway Biosphere," which is too pro-Israeli in sentiment and too neoimperial in outlook to realize that the biggest problem facing the Middle East is not Islam or autocracy but the looming economic and political collapse that will breed yet more despair and terrorism.

This is an interesting thesis well worth developing into a book, but its complexity demands much methodological rigor and a wealth of reliable data. Glain's book fails on both scores.

The author's ideological assumptions are neoliberal/Marxist: "A direct line leads from low volume on the Palestinian Securities Exchange to a young boy throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers in Ramallah." His repeated insistence that Muslim extremism cannot be explained in isolation from the issues of inequality and lack of opportunity reflects a mind-set hell-bent on placing economics, rather than culture and morals, at the top of the hierarchy of causes in human affairs.

That Glain's knowledge of history is shallow is not surprising in a "mainstream" journalist, but his account of the early Islamic empire veers into the farcical, as when he asserts that "there never was a fundamentalist Muslim empire" but that the early caliphs developed "a realm that was largely secular in spirit, tolerant and congenial to foreign ideas, cultures, and religions." Muhammad allegedly saw that "his young faith would appeal only through conciliation," and his "capture of Mecca was followed by only a few executions." Jews and Christians "were generally left alone in exchange for a small tax," and, on the whole, "it was subtle diplomacy rather than the sword that established the Muslim empire." We are told that the "appeal of Islam spread throughout the Middle East" and that it "promoted tolerance," which "was perhaps the Islamic world's greatest achievement." This spirit of tolerance, the comparatively peaceful mingling of faiths and races, continued "until the end of the Ottoman rule in 1918." It all changed when two European imperial powers, Britain and France, carved up the region in the aftermath of World War I.

This caricature of history is unworthy of detailed refutation, and, on such flawed foundations, no solid edifice can

be built. To Glain's unwitting credit, he does not attempt to develop a coherent argument about the nature of Arabia's economic and social malaise but offers instead a collage of edited interviews with some two-dozen Arabs in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt. While these people are not representative of their communities, *Wall Street Journal* readers can relate to them. All share an entrepreneurial spirit and a self-professed sympathy for the West and its ways, while remaining sharply critical of Western, and especially American, policies in the region. Those sketches are interesting insofar as they illustrate the mind-set of a frustrated and yet potentially promising segment of the Arab body politic, but they are no substitute for a unifying narrative. The reader receives the impression that Glain made use of his leftover notes by inserting them into an ill-fitting preconceived framework. The technique is familiar: For instance, it has, over the past decade, yielded a score of bad books about the Balkans.

The true causes of today's squalor and corruption in the Arab world are primarily moral and cultural. After the brief flourishing that happened *in spite of* Islam (rather than because of it), the region's history has been that of a long decline without a fall. Always reliant on the plunder of its neighbors and robbery of its non-Muslim subjects, Islam was unable to create new wealth once the conquerors had run out of steam and reduced the vanquished to utter penury. Pre-Islamic Egypt, like the pre-Bolshevik Ukraine, was the granary of Europe; now, both must import food. Pre-Islamic Syria and Asia Minor suffered under Caliph Umar a fate similar to that of highly developed and prosperous East Germany and Czechoslovakia after 1945. In both cases, the dominant ideology—Islam or communism—opposed the preconditions for successful economic development in principle as well as in practice.

Not even a prime location at the crossroads of the world could counter the slow poison of obscurantism. The nature of the problem has always been spiritual. Like all totalitarian ideologies, Islam has an inherent tendency to the closing of the mind. The spirit of critical inquiry essential to the growth of knowledge is completely alien to it. When, in the 19th century, the Muslim world realized that something was seriously wrong, its view of knowledge remained nevertheless that of a commodity to be imported

and used. Western engineers, military officers, and doctors could train their Muslim students, but the latter never managed to give more than what was imparted to them.

The problem remains insoluble to this day: Glain's Arab interlocutors want some of the fruits of Western culture—stock markets, efficient bureaucracies, reliable banks—but they cannot import the culture itself, even if they wished to do so. The developed world's discipline, cohesion, ingenuity, and prosperity are rooted in those aspects of the Western psyche that cannot be easily transplanted. Instant gratification—inherent to the Muslim mind-set ever since Muhammad resorted to divine intervention in his lust for his daughter-in-law—is odious to the European and Oriental psyche alike; hence, Asian “tigers” prosper, whereas Arabs do not.

There are symphony orchestras in Singapore, Seoul, and Beijing, but none in Amman, Ramallah, or Beirut. If and when Stephen Glain grasps the significance of that fact, he may be ready to write a useful book about the causes and cures for Arab economic, social, political, and cultural failures.

Foreign-affairs editor Srdja Trifkovic is the author, most recently, of Defeating Jihad: How the War on Terror May Yet Be Won, In Spite of Ourselves.

3:00 A.M. in America

by James Vogel

Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America

by Philip Jenkins
Oxford: Oxford University Press;
344 pp., \$28.00



In *Decade of Nightmares*, Philip Jenkins considers how the progressive and “forward-looking” decade of free love, drugs, and cultural revolution led to the reactionary “counterrevolution” of the 1980's, personified by Ronald Reagan. The author gives fair play to both sides of the various debates, which makes for interesting reading. It is often difficult to tell, through his choice of words, whether he sympathizes more

with the former or with the latter. In fact, *Decade of Nightmares* is basically a collection of studies of various aspects of American life in this period, with the common thread of reaction and social concern unifying everything from popular culture to government legislation.

Jenkins persuasively argues that the 1970's are, essentially, overlooked and underappreciated. The roots of modern “conservatism” stem in large part from the debates on crime, foreign policy, and questions of morality that raged in American society during that decade.

Throughout the book, Jenkins places heavy emphasis on the media and popular opinion in accounting for the changes wrought in American society since the 60's. News stories and documentaries throughout the 70's made use of legitimate concerns such as rising crime rates, predatory criminals, and religious cults to scare parents into voting for draconian laws and ordinances. The teenagers of the 60's had children of their own the following decade, which caused the agents of social revolution themselves to rethink their convictions.

But how did this happen? Surely there was no monumental conversion to pre-60's ideals in the late 70's. Were the 80's truly host to a counterrevolution? Perhaps a definition of terms is in order. As Jenkins says,

In matters of foreign policy or war, disorder or terrorism, poverty or urban crisis, crime or drug abuse, many Americans adopted a more pessimistic, more threatening interpretation of human behavior, which harked back to much older themes in American culture.

It would be safe to say that *conservatism*, as defined by Jenkins and by most self-styled conservatives today, is incarnated in an aggressive foreign policy, the war on drugs, and the defense of suburban lifestyles.

Jenkins is fair in his analysis of the cultural debates that raged in decades past and which continue to be discussed with great emotion today. He dedicates an entire chapter to the problem of crime and the penal system. Throughout the 60's and early 70's, heavy emphasis was laid upon the “reform” of a criminal. As crime continued to rise, however, especially in the inner cities, popular opinion turned back in favor of “punishment” and incarceration. As a result, prison popu-

lations soared, and the use of insanity as a defense came under heavy criticism. As Jenkins concludes, "Answers were to be found in a straightforward assertion of traditional moralities and a clear demarcation of the lines separating right and wrong."

In one of the more noteworthy sections of his book, Jenkins examines the issue of U.S. foreign policy. After the Vietnam War, the American public felt confident that the military would be less frequently deployed in overseas endeavors. The Soviet threat was believed to be contained through détente, and the spirit of anti-interventionism was well represented in the U.S. government. Events in the 70's, however, rekindled the debate over precisely what sort of a threat the Soviet Union posed to America. The Yom Kippur War of 1973, suspicion that Russia was funding and supporting revolutionary movements in various European and Middle Eastern countries, and the condemnation (in 1976) of nuclear weapons by many Catholic bishops all played a part in this development. As Jenkins notes, "through 1975 and 1976, conservative and neoconservative critics denounced American weakness in the face of the USSR."

In the mid-70's, "detente was repeatedly attacked by hawkish figures within the intelligence and defense establishment, including Donald Rumsfeld and Richard Cheney." In 1976, the CIA established a group (Team B) to study the question of Soviet Russia and the danger it posed to America.

The members of Team B included some well-known hard-liners, including Richard Pipes, Paul Nitze, and Paul Wolfowitz. . . . [C]entral to the Team B analysis was its view of aggressive Soviet intentions, a quest for victory and domination . . . [T]he Soviets were depicted as predators biding their time before they could strike at a weakened West.

If we fast-forward 30 years and replace "Soviet" with "Iraqi"—or even "Iranian"—it becomes clear that the neoconservatives have only changed enemies during that time. While it is true that the Cold War and recent wars of aggression are not exactly comparable, the vision of global democratic revolution has nevertheless remained intact over the years.

Throughout his book, Jenkins de-

votes considerable attention to Ronald Reagan, the dominant political figure of 1980's America and champion of the "right." Yet Jenkins argues convincingly that "Carter was more conservative than is often recalled, and Reagan more liberal." As evidence, he notes that,

on issues of gender and morality, Reagan had a distinctly moderate record, having endorsed the ERA and opposed the anti-gay Briggs initiative. His two terms as governor included liberal measures on abortion rights and no-fault divorce.

Beyond the issue of Ronald Reagan's conservatism, though, lies the question of whether it is just to credit him with the direction taken by the United States in the 80's.

Reagan gave form and direction to powerful social currents, but he did not initiate them. Changes in the realm of partisan politics were accompanied by social transformations that were not confined to Republicans or political conservatives. . . . [F]ew will deny that Ronald Reagan presided over a revolution, but he was joining a revolution already in progress.

At the risk of oversimplifying, perhaps the main difference between Carter and Reagan was not so much a question of policy as a question of character—or, at least, the appearance of character. Carter was viewed as weak, indecisive, and lacking confidence. Reagan, on the other hand, had a notable public presence, engaged listeners with his speeches, and brimmed with optimism regarding the future of America. Reagan's strong leadership as president accelerated the programs Carter initiated at the end of his term.

Most readers of this book will have lived through the times addressed by it and, thus, will be familiar with most of the events narrated therein. Time gives a perspective, however, that is not possessed in the present. Did the "political right" of the 1980's really launch a counterattack against the liberalism and materialism of the 20th century? Communism may have fallen as a political machine, yet it has largely succeeded as a cultural phenomenon. Over the past 40 years, the family has further disintegrated, wealth

has been distributed more unevenly, and the population has grown increasingly passive through technology.

Left or right, Democrat or Republican: These are the choices we are offered in our so-called democracy. *Decade of Nightmares* should reinforce the notion that these labels are not worth fighting for in themselves. Rather, we ought to be concerned with truth and falsehood, good and evil—realities that are discernible even in our debauched age.

James Vogel is the assistant editor for the Angelus Press.

Genuine Outrages

by Clark Stooksbury

Donkey Cons: Sex, Crime and Corruption in the Democratic Party

by Lynn Vincent and Robert Stacy McCain

Nashville: Nelson Current; 273 pp., \$24.99



I admit to being a biased reviewer. *Donkey Cons* is a book about the Democratic Party, and I will say up front that I don't much care for the Democrats. Consider a sorry, random list: Kennedy (pick one), Pelosi, Schumer, Clinton (pick one), Dean, Kerry, Lieberman. The names alone are enough to turn one's stomach. There is only one other organization whose leadership can come as close to bringing up the bile—the Republicans.

My disdain for both parties is not a part of a lame attempt to be "fair and balanced." While there remain significant differences between the parties, they are both part of a ruling regime that always takes the country down the road to empire abroad and centralized government at home. Democrats had an opportunity in 2002 to oppose both the President's rush to war and the creation of an Orwellian-sounding Department of "Homeland Security," which had been their idea in the first place. For the most part, they tried to play it safe, and they have suffered the consequences at the polls.

Lynn Vincent (of *World*) and Robert Stacy McCain (of the *Washington Times*) argue that, of the two major parties, one is essentially dishonorable and evil and should cease to exist. (They sub-

title one chapter "The Party of Treason and Subversion," which indicates that they see the Democrats not merely as the opposition party but as a destructive alien force.) To support their thesis, the authors produce numerous examples of Democratic perfidy and corruption. To the extent that their purpose is to convince the reader that many Democrats are bad, they succeed. But *Donkey Cons* holds little appeal for anyone who isn't already a partisan Republican, and it enters a market already saturated with the products of Ann Coulter, Sean Hannity, Bernard Goldberg, Michelle Malkin, and many others.

While *Donkey Cons* has its flaws, there is no doubt that it has the goods on quite a few corrupt and contemptible Democrats. The drunken, lecherous, 800-pound gorilla in the room is Massachusetts senator Edward Kennedy. When Kennedy drove off Dike Bridge on Chappaquiddick Island with a young woman as his passenger 37 years ago, he faced a continuum of honorable options, beginning with risking his life in order to save her. Failing that, he could have alerted the proper authorities in a timely fashion. The final option would have been to resign his office in disgrace. The obvious reason why he failed to choose any of the three suggests itself: Kennedy is a dishonorable man. What Vincent and McCain neglect to add is that, these days, Kennedy is most dangerous not behind the wheel but when partnering with Republicans such as George W. Bush and John McCain to centralize public education or to unlock the border and throw away the key.

Another perfidious Democrat that *Donkey Cons* exposes is former Detroit mayor Coleman Young. In office, Young accelerated white flight, raised taxes, and expanded city government, while cutting back on the police force in the face of rising crime rates. It was his administration that destroyed the Poletown neighborhood, *via* eminent domain, to build a General Motors plant (now closed)—a generation before the notorious *Kelo* decision. Coleman Young might serve well as the poster mayor of anarcho-tyranny.

Inevitably, Vincent and McCain recite the sins of Bill Clinton, giving most space to the fundraising scandal from the 1996 election while completely ignoring Waco. They indulge in the speculation, not entirely implausible, that Janet Reno gave Ken Starr the go-ahead to inves-

tigate the Lewinsky case so as to deprive the Chinagate investigations of oxygen. They also dredge up murky allegations of midnight drug running into the airport at Mena, Arkansas, in the 1980's that supposedly implicate Bill Clinton, while ignoring the other part of that conspiracy theory: the speculation that the operation was managed at the behest of the Reagan administration in order to fund the Contras.

And while *Donkey Cons* denounces Democrats who oppose Republican foreign policy, I found I could not always trust the authors' reporting. For instance, they cite Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) in an attempt to bolster the alarmism of the Bush administration:

The last UN weapons inspectors left Iraq in October of 1998. We are confident that Saddam Hussein retained some stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and that he has since embarked on a crash course to build up his chemical and biological warfare capability. Intelligence reports also indicate that he is seeking nuclear weapons.

Since Byrd consistently opposed the build-up to war, I decided to check this speech. In spite of the period that follows the word *weapons*, Vincent and McCain actually cut Senator Byrd off in mid-sentence in a way that makes him seem deeply worried about the threat from Iraq. In fact, the West Virginia senator went on to say,

Intelligence reports also indicate that he is seeking nuclear weapons but has not yet achieved nuclear capability. It is now October of 2002. Four years have gone by in which neither this administration nor the previous one felt compelled to invade Iraq to protect against the imminent threat of weapons of mass destruction. Until today. Until 33 days until elec-

tion day. Now we are being told that we must act immediately, before adjournment and before the elections. Why the rush?

Before the war, many observers considered it plausible that Iraq might have had several items that fit the term "weapons of mass destruction." Indeed, a few obsolete mustard-gas shells did turn up, eventually. But the Bush administration wasn't content simply to assert that Saddam Hussein might have a few such weapons. In his infamous speech in Cincinnati (October 7, 2002), the President spoke of a "grave" and "gathering" threat and "clear evidence of peril." Even in the truncated form presented in *Donkey Cons*, Sen. Byrd's statement doesn't begin to approach the hysteria evinced by the President and his administration, the Republican Party, and the chattering (and typing) classes that supported Bush's drive to war.

Toward the end of their book, Vincent and McCain engage in the pointless exercise of listing the numerous Democrats who received campaign donations from Jack Abramoff's clients. This proves nothing, as the scandal doesn't concern who took money from these clients. Nor can the authors assert that Abramoff directed clients to give money to any Democrats, or that he bribed them—the central charge involved in the Abramoff case.

There is, of course, no question that the history of the Democratic Party is rife with corruption, and that the Democrats have to their credit more sex and good-old-boys-on-the-take scandals than the Republicans can boast. But after years of Republican rule that has driven the country deeply into debt and into the quagmire of Iraq, it takes a true believer to get worked up over the many genuine outrages that Vincent and McCain document.

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

Read Thomas Fleming's
HARD Right!

at www.ChroniclesMagazine.org

Letter to the Bishop

by Joe Ecclesia

The I-Word

Your Excellency:

This past May, I attended commencement ceremonies at Christendom College, where James, the oldest son of my oldest friend, was graduating with a degree in philosophy. Some of our fellow countrymen would declare such a degree about as useful as the dresses once modeled by Twiggy. (Do you remember Twiggy, Bishop? She was that London anorexic who helped popularize the miniskirt back in the 1960's, back when God had just quit being an Englishman.) If we use as our standard for judgment the trashy curricula that have passed for liberal-arts programs these last 50 years, my astute countrymen are justified in considering such a degree worthless. To paraphrase Churchill: "Never was so much paid out by so many for so little." Christendom, however, offers the exception to the rule; it follows a demanding program of studies designed to teach students to think clearly and to live fully human lives. (By the way, Your Excellency, I feel compelled to add here that my friend considers his son's degree worthwhile in part because it irritated the devil out of his mother-in-law, a Midwesterner of practical bent who encourages all of her grandchildren to major in accounting or nursing. If such a lack of charity is a sin worthy of confession, please drop me a note, and I'll pass it along to my friend.) At any rate, James will no doubt put his degree to good use in law school this fall.

But I digress. I wanted to tell you about the speakers at the commencement exercises. The salutatorian, Maria Newton, delivered an address about the beauties of a Catholic liberal-arts education that would have knocked your miter off. (My friend says that his mother-in-law nearly cracked a tooth grinding her jaws together.) This young woman's demeanor and strength of character magnified the effectiveness of her words; I'd highly recommend her to you should you ever wish to replace the bureaucrats—all of them—in our diocesan office of education. The valedictorian, Chrissie Walsh, spoke of the opportunity Christendom provided "to learn from the great minds

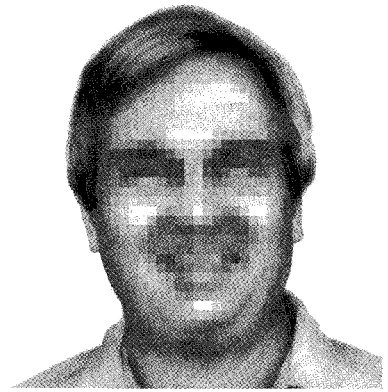
of human history and to discover the perennial truth that provides the answers to man's most pressing questions." I know, I know, Miss Walsh employed politically incorrect gender usage in that statement, yet I'm certain that this fine young lady—Oops! Is "lady" an acceptable word these days in diocesan lingo? If not, *mea culpa* as well, Your Excellency—would also prove a valuable member of your staff. The president of the college, Dr. Timothy O'Donnell, encouraged students to continue to look to Rome for spiritual and religious guidance, while entrusting their lives to the heart of Jesus.

The main speaker that afternoon, however, was George Cardinal Pell. His remarks prompted my letter to you.

Cardinal Pell is a tall, shambling Australian who came close to playing professional rugby before entering the priesthood. Since rugby players from Australia have the reputation of being the Hell's Kitchen gang in a sport celebrated for its mayhem, broken bones, and massive beer consumption, we may assume that the good cardinal both took and delivered many shots to the head during his years of play. Perhaps that combination explains why the cardinal had the audacity—Hemingway might have said the *co-jones*—to issue a warning to his audience about Islam.

After congratulating the students on their accomplishments and briefly offering his own high regard for Christendom College, the cardinal stated that he wished to speak about "Christendom's most enduring enemy, not to rekindle ancient hatreds, but to stress the need for discerning cooperation, to work for progress and coexistence, to avoid disaster." The Christendom to which the cardinal referred was not, of course, the college but those lands in which Christians live, while his comments about ancient hatreds had nothing to do with study or exams but with Islam. (The man behind me kept whispering, "He's not going there, he's not going there," and then, when the cardinal said the I-word, remarked loudly, "He went there!")

Although he had caught flack the previous month for a similar speech to the



Legatus Summit, a group of high-powered Catholic businessmen, Cardinal Pell showed no signs of being silenced by his critics. He encouraged students and parents to study Islam, to read the Koran, to judge for themselves whether Islam contains a predilection for violence. He encouraged students to look at the historical record of Islam. He pointed out that the decreasing birthrates among Europeans—in some countries now at a point of self-extinction—meant that Islam would soon wield even more power from the Atlantic to the Urals. Finally, he said:

As graduates of Christendom College, you should be people of Christian hope and human optimism. You should also know what you are discussing and understand the basic issues our world is confronting. Islamic terrorism is one such issue, and these terrorists want to provoke a clash of civilizations. As far as possible, we should not oblige them.

Although many Americans from different political and religious backgrounds—the whispering man behind me, to whom I introduced myself at the conclusion of the ceremony, described himself as a "fallen-away Episcopalian"—would agree with the points made by the cardinal, few will ever hear anyone make those points so openly and publicly. In addressing subjects of great import, our current brood of politicians and preachers generally react as a homeowner who, aware of termites attacking the foundation of his house, closes his eyes in the hope that the termites will simply go away. (N.B., Your Excellency: Back in the 1960's, one of my uncles disliked hippies so much that he literally closed

his eyes whenever he saw one. He spotted some hippies in downtown Atlanta one day and wound up under the tires of a Greyhound bus.)

Certain proposals are in order. Many of my fellow Catholics might take a sort of George W. Bush approach to Islamic violence by stating that Islam is really a religion of peace and that we're willing to kill as many Muslims as it takes to keep it that way. We might encourage these advocates to join the military. I was wondering if we should not look in other directions as well. Has the Church ever considered recruiting Her own platoons of suicide bombers? Given Church teachings regarding suicide, we'd need to change the name; perhaps we could call our bombers "helpers," as in "we are helping Muslims reach Allah." Those heretical Catholics who advocate assisted suicide and "mercy killing" would make excellent "helpers," especially since they are already convinced that the planet has too many people. And how about a new crusade? With another change of name—we could call our crusaders "tourists"—we could dispatch planeload after planeload of "tourists" to the Holy Land, the Sudan, and other places around the world where Muslims are persecuting Christians. These "tourists" could smuggle in crucifixes and Bibles, which they would then distribute to the population. They could organize and lead peaceful protests. We could require our elderly participants to dress as they do for Mass—the old women in trousers or sweatpants, the men in sweatpants or shorts—so as to offend Muslim sensibilities. Such excursions might also provide a marvelous opportunity for our liturgical dancers to engage in a sort of street theater, a spectacle certain to arouse the keen interest of Islamic men on the streets of Tehran or Cairo. The subsequent assault by Muslims on Christians might turn the rest of the world against Islam. Many "tourists," especially the dancers, would be martyred, of course, and though we couldn't promise 40 virgins on their entrance into Heaven, you could possibly grant all deceased "tourists" some sort of massive indulgence. (We'd better keep that one a secret from the Lutherans.)

All right, all right, Your Excellency: enough of the jokes. Assuming that we want to keep our eyes open, and assuming that we don't want to go the route of our fellow Catholics and Christians in Europe (the only alternative left to those

poor fools, other than donning burqas and celebrating Ramadan, is an at-home crusade of some sort, which is about as likely as a Bourbon Restoration), it occurred to me that you and your fellow bishops could have some impact on this issue. Incidentally, I wouldn't recommend trying to make a political impact; you've lost all legitimacy on Capitol Hill. A priest in our parish who recently spoke of the bishops' initiatives regarding illegal immigration was met with silence and amusement. "Who listens to the bishops anymore?" one man said.

Still, you shepherds might consider for your own flocks a few of the measures suggested by Cardinal Pell. First, he encouraged Catholics to know their own Faith. Though some progress in this area has been made, most Catholics remain abysmally ignorant of Christian doctrine. Recently, for instance, an acquaintance of mine attended a confirmation ceremony in Poughkeepsie, New York, where the priest spent most of his homily telling the confirmands why they should not take drugs. "He told them about things they could understand," she said, "not all this theology." Her remarks bring to mind Beethoven's knock at the gate: dumb-dumb-dumb dumb. The mere fact that the Church has spent so much time this past year trying to counteract the effects of *The Da Vinci Code* should speak volumes about the supreme ignorance of today's Catholics. When I die, I don't think God's going to hold me personally responsible for that ignorance, but I suspect he's going to look long and hard at the dossiers of some of your comrades.

You bishops might also heed Cardinal Pell and teach us the history of Islam. We are aware of the bloodthirsty Christian Crusaders—much of that information is false or one-sided, but we'll let that go—but how many of your flock know even the most basic facts about Islam's savage attacks on Christianity? How many Catholics know that Muhammad planned more than 50 military campaigns, mostly against other Arabs, and personally led some 20 of them? How many know that North Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey were once Christian, but fell prey to Muslim invasions? How many have heard of Tours, of the sack and burning of Monte Cassino, of the hundreds of thousands of Christians enslaved by Muslims over the last 1,400 years? How many of your flock could tell you anything at all about the Reconquis-

ta in Spain, the siege of Constantinople, the battle of Lepanto? Ignorance may be bliss, Your Excellency, but it can also be a sword in the heart.

Third, the American bishops should vigorously denounce Muslim attacks on Christians. Every day of the year, somewhere in the world, Muslims are persecuting Christians; intimidating them; burning their cars, their homes, their churches; raping them; enslaving and killing them. Local bishops and the Vatican decry these crimes, but how many times are they mentioned from the altars of American churches? Around the globe, various Muslim organizations, sometimes with the connivance of national governments, carry out heinous, bloody acts, yet most Catholics seem oblivious to the point of stupidity to this ongoing violence.

Finally, the Church might actively promote large families again. We live in a strange society in which we drive SUVs and enormous vans, and build houses double in size from those of our grandparents, yet American families are barely reproducing themselves. Surely, those large houses, big cars, and the popularity of such movies as *Cheaper By the Dozen* would tend to affirm a dream on the part of many Americans for a return to larger families. If the old axiom holds true (The side with the most babies wins), then demographics strongly suggests that we will soon say goodbye to secular Israeli governments, to most nations of Western Europe, and to Mexico (if only because most Mexicans will be living in the United States). We in the United States still have the time and opportunity for dealing with these issues.

While many women who now wear sweatpants to Wal-Mart might look better in burqas, and while the waistlines of American men and women might also benefit from fasting during Ramadan, I'm not content to go to my grave knowing that my grandchildren may be forced to recite "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." I remain partial to a longer, more ancient Creed, the one that includes Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the one that stresses the Communion of Saints, the one that is True.

Inshallah, Bishop, as our Muslim friends might say. But I much prefer *Deus tecum*. Keeping you in my prayers,

Joe Ecclesia

Black Like Me

Rockford alderman Ann Thompson owns a cleaning service. That, in itself, is not surprising; while Rockford aldermen receive some benefits that are traditionally reserved to full-time employees (such as health insurance), they are paid a part-time stipend, and only those who are retired or independently wealthy could afford not to have another job.

For months now, Alderman Thompson has been the chief proponent of a “diversity-procurement policy” for city contracts—what used to be called, in a less politically correct day, “minority set-asides.” (Today, no one wants to set aside minorities; but who doesn’t want to procure some diversity, which we’ve been assured is the spice of life?) Her advocacy, too, is not surprising: In addition to being a woman, Alderman Thompson is a Democrat and black. Of course, to be completely fair, the policy, as the *Rockford Register Star* notes, “enjoys unanimous support on the council and with Mayor Larry Morrissey.” (Only 8 of the 14 aldermen are Democrats; 11 are white; and 11 are male. Mayor Morrissey is a white male independent.) The only debate has been whether the policy should set “goals” to award 25 percent of contracts to minority-owned firms and 5 percent to firms owned by women, as Alderman Thompson wanted, or whether it should avoid numbers and simply direct the city to award more contracts to such firms, as Alderman Pat Curran, a white male Republican, would prefer.

What is surprising is that Curran’s version of the proposed policy is the one that the council ultimately passed on June 23. And Rockfordians have Alderman Thompson to thank. Unwittingly, she has exposed the sordid reality of such policies and put local politicians who support them in a rather awkward position.

In 2005, Alderman Thompson’s company, Galaxy Cleaning, won a \$526,000 contract to deliver ready-mix concrete for use in the construction of the new, \$140-million Winnebago County Jail, even though, it appears from a later interview on local talk-radio station WNTA, she doesn’t know the difference between cement and concrete. Thompson herself admitted to the *Rockford Register Star* that

“It was just a matter of processing paperwork”; the concrete was furnished and delivered by non-minority-owned Meyer Material, and neither Thompson nor any of her employees were even present at its delivery. The alderman won’t say how much money she made by acting as a middleman in order to satisfy a Winnebago County goal to have ten-percent minority participation in the project.

Everyone—including (perhaps especially) the supporters of such policies—knows that Alderman Thompson’s case is far from exceptional. Years ago, when such policies were just coming into vogue, every conservative magazine under the sun (and many mainstream newspapers) ran stories exposing how such policies allowed unscrupulous businessmen to game the system by establishing “minority-owned” or “women-owned” firms whose entire purpose was to snag contracts that the white businessmen could not get themselves (or could only get by submitting a significantly lower bid than that presented by a “minority-owned” firm). The fact that Galaxy Cleaning is not merely a front group but an actual minority-owned business is not a substantive difference.

What is different today is that the “conservative” Republicans who, in the past, opposed such policies are now almost fully on board. From Alderman Curran to Winnebago County board chairman Scott Christiansen and state’s attorney Paul Logli (who both claimed that Thompson had done nothing wrong) to Sjostrom & Sons (longtime contributors to Republican candidates in Winnebago County and throughout Illinois), the jail contractor who awarded Thompson the contract, there are more Republicans involved in this sordid little story than there are Democrats. Perhaps that’s because, as the “party of business,” they know that—as long as you know how to play the game—there’s always money to be made off of even the most radically leftist government policy.

And radical leftism is precisely what this is. Let’s drop the euphemisms: This isn’t about setting aside a share of the American Dream for minorities or procuring diversity in a field (construction)



that has traditionally been dominated by white males. This is socialism with a human face. It goes beyond even the soft-socialist idea of “equality of opportunity”; these policies aim at equality of outcome—and, in some ways, they go beyond even that. In the United States today, a legitimate minority-owned concrete supplier who submitted a competitive bid for the contract that Alderman Thompson “won” would, even without such a policy in place, likely have a better than average chance of winning the contract. All else being equal, given the choice between awarding the contract to a minority-owned firm or a “majority-owned” one, how many government agencies would choose the latter?

In a better time, the fact that an alderman was advocating a policy that stood directly to benefit a business that she owned would be scandal enough to force her resignation from office. Today, however, Thompson’s fellow black Democratic alderman Linda McNeely greeted the passage of Curran’s version of the policy by urging minorities in Rockford to “do it. All of you. Become middlemen. You have to do what you have to do.”

Moreover, Alderman Thompson is defended by prominent members of the (supposedly) opposite political party, and she’s showing no signs of remorse. At the very least, the taxpayers of Winnebago County should demand that she return whatever profit Galaxy Cleaning made acting as a middleman in this deal, because, morally, every penny that she made beyond what Meyer Materials would have received if it had won the contract directly was stolen from them.

I won’t hold my breath. I will, however, thank Alderman Thompson for doing her best to slow the city of Rockford’s progress down the primrose path of socialism. ©

Letter From Zimbabwe

by Edward Dutton

The Meaning of Racism

Racism is the issue of our time, particularly in Britain, with her legacy of colonialism, and in the United States, with her history of slavery. Race is the ultimate taboo, and careers, such as that of Trent Lott in the United States or those of various British Conservative MPs, have been permanently ruined by one unguarded remark. Public bodies in Britain, such as the fire brigade, rush to declare themselves "institutionally racist," rather like 16th-century heretics admitting to blasphemy in the hope of avoiding the flames. In America, racial discrimination has been turned on its head through "affirmative action."

Not far beneath the surface of "anti-racism" is the racist view that the white race is the dominant one, and that all white people should have collective guilt for being white. Being white, or being part of any historically dominant nation, is shameful. But being nonwhite, or even part of a white-subjugated nation such as Scotland or Wales, is something of which to be proud. Nowhere can this understanding of racism be seen more clearly than in Zimbabwe. For there is only one thing more shameful than being white, and that is being a "white African."

In 2000, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe introduced a policy of forcing white people out of the country. After almost 20 years in power, his popularity was on the wane. "War veterans," who were demanding compensation (though most of them had never fought in the guerrilla war against white rule), were undermining his credibility; he had lost a referendum on a new constitution, and it looked like he would lose power; so he needed to unite the Zimbabwean people and his own party, ZANU-PF. Reigniting resentment against the tiny white minority of about 4,000, most of whom were successful farmers who were feeding the country, was an ingenious method of doing this. The war veterans were permitted to run

riot. By March 2000, they had invaded 500 white-owned farms. Images of their drunken and drug-fueled violence were beamed around the world as their leader, Chenjerai "Hitler" Hunzvi declared, "Those whites who think they are Zimbabweans will be marched to the airport and sent home to Britain." By April, five white farmers had been murdered by the gangs, and many more hospitalized, because the police would not assist them. Also, Zimbabwe's chief justice, Anthony Gubbay, was forced to resign purely because he was white, and the authorities made it clear that they would not protect him if he stayed. There was almost no international response. Bill Clinton ignored the issue; Tony Blair slightly cut Zimbabwe's aid.

Contrast this with the response to Ian Smith, the former prime minister of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe's colonial name). Rhodesia was a self-governing British dominion in all but name and had been so since 1923. By the early 1960's, the Rhodesian government was contemplating the gradual ending of white minority rule. Voting, for blacks, was by land qualification. Thus, all 230,000 whites could vote, while only 60,000 or so blacks qualified. In 1962, the Rhodesian Front came from nowhere to win power. It wanted white-minority rule to remain forever. In 1965, under Ian Smith, it took all 50 parliamentary seats reserved for whites. In response to British pressure to revoke racist laws and minority rule, Smith issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The international chorus of condemnation could not have been louder: Smith was branded the leader of a "racist regime." British prime minister Harold Wilson seriously contemplated invading Rhodesia. Several countries boycotted Rhodesia, and, when Smith declared Rhodesia a republic in 1970, only South Africa, Greece, and Portugal would recognize it. At the time, China was massacring Tibetans at will, but, for a small, landlocked African country to deny black people the vote was utterly outrageous. However, Mugabe's ethnic cleansing of independent Zimbabwe's white minority provoked no accusations of racism at all. He was merely addressing an historical wrong, of which Britain should be ashamed. Smith, as a white African leading a black country, needed to

be crushed.

All of Smith's predecessors as Rhodesian prime minister had been born and educated in Britain, but Smith was born in Rhodesia and attended university in South Africa. (Rhodesia did not have a university at the time.) He felt almost no ties to Britain; his declaration of independence was very popular; and, even now, he remains in Zimbabwe, ignoring Mugabe's intermittent threats to prosecute him. When the British Empire fell, the British generally returned to Britain, because they had always thought of themselves as British. Smith managed to do something quite dangerous in Rhodesia: He helped to foster a strong sense of white Rhodesian national identity. His Rhodesian Front was a nationalist party. It presented the distant British as a threat who would introduce black-majority rule and continually emphasized that Rhodesia was at war. Mugabe's terror campaign killed thousands, and there was the constant threat from the British. Smith emphasized that Rhodesians had a shared history: They had all come to Rhodesia for a better life. Also, there was a clear "other"—the blacks and the British—that any nationalism needs to thrive. Smith had all that he needed to create a nation, an "imagined community," as sociologist Ernst Gellner once put it. So the declaration of independence made total sense. But *that* kind of nation building does not square with the powers that be.

In fact, the inverse is now almost encouraged, at least in Britain. Under Tony Blair's New Labour government, Scotland has effectively been given independence and has almost the same status as a dependency. She controls her own affairs but does not have her own foreign or defense policy. Before Labour introduced the Scottish parliament, there was already a strong sense of national feeling in Scotland. Today, it is stronger than ever, and it has been followed by the Scottish government's introduction of clearly racist policies. English students pay higher tuition fees than European students to attend Scottish universities, while Scottish students pay nothing.

The British government has even described a rise in English nationalism as a "danger." This attitude can be seen in numerous official bodies. Certain fire

brigades have banned firemen from displaying English flags on engines because the flag is deemed "racist." Pubs can get a special "late license" for St. Patrick's Day but not for St. George's.

Within England herself, the establishment of *de facto* national communities is encouraged by the British government under the policy of multiculturalism. City councils allow the celebration of Hindu and Muslim festivals, while some insist that Christian imagery is beyond the pale, even at Christmas. This has all added to the ghettoization of many English towns, especially in the north, where white people and Asians often have nothing to do with each other and do not have the same first language or history. In these areas, there are effectively separate nations. Those who challenge this, however, or suggest that this is dangerous for Britain are immediately charged with "racism." Yet, to have failed to challenge Ian Smith, or to do anything other than condemn him as a fascist, is just as "racist." Racism is a one-way accusation. It is a way of expressing guilt for being a member of a formerly colonial nation or race. Those who were once colonized cannot be racist themselves. Thus, racism is a failure to be sufficiently guilty.

Racism and antiracism are primal, requiring a clear contrast in order to work; and this, too, can be observed in Zimbabwe. Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front was a white party ruling black people. The two peoples were conspicuously different and easy to identify. Under Mugabe, the same situation was reversed. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) almost won the 2000 general election and held nearly half of the elected seats. (Before this, Zimbabwe was virtually a one-party state.) Indeed, the MDC would likely have carried the day had it not been for electoral fraud, gerrymandering, and a brutal campaign of voter intimidation. Also, ZANU-PF was able to exploit the involvement of whites in the MDC quite brilliantly. Pictures of white farmers signing checks for MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai were played again and again on the state-run news. And four of the MDC's new MPs were white. Mugabe, naturally, used this to argue that the MDC "was a party for white farmers" and a "British plot" to recolonize Zimbabwe.

Elsewhere, where the ethnic contrast has not involved a clear difference in color, the accusation of racism has not been leveled at all. Nobody questions the substantial influence of Swedish speak-

ers (just five percent of the population) in Finland. The excessive influence of Scots in the British government has been termed the "Scottish Raj," but nobody in England really cares. Questioning such influence may be termed "racist," but it can always be argued that it is an issue of culture rather than race. This argument is far more difficult to maintain when the difference, as in Zimbabwe, is stark.

So what is the future of white Zimbabweans? Under Mugabe's tyranny, almost all of them have been forced out. Their farms lie fallow, and the people whom they once fed are starving. A good deal of them have started from scratch, farming in South Africa, and countries such as Nigeria have welcomed many of them with open arms. A host of others, as well as numerous educated black Zimbabweans who support the MDC, have fled to Britain. However, many of them desire to return once the elderly Mugabe is dead or removed. Currently, Mugabe is in the process of taking the remaining white farms into public ownership.

The alternative party in Zimbabwe is the MDC, which effectively controls most of Zimbabwe's cities. Its chairman, Morgan Tsvangirai, a miner and trade-union leader, managed to galvanize the country and almost toppled Mugabe in 2002. Tsvangirai lost badly in the 2005 election, however, as many Zimbabweans expressed their disappointment with the lack of progress, having previously risked their lives to vote MDC. Since then, Tsvangirai has shown that he is, perhaps, not the man for Zimbabwe. Apart from getting himself put on trial for, and acquitted of, treason after making stupid remarks, he has become increasingly autocratic within his own party. In September 2005, his party voted to contest the forthcoming senate elections, but he overruled their consensus. (Despite Tsvangirai's threats, many went ahead anyway, and the party split.) He accused fellow party members of rigging this vote and claimed that his opponents were ZANU-PF spies. When a white former MDC MP, Roy Bennett, questioned his leadership, Tsvangirai implied that he was crazy because he had been jailed for over a year for shoving the justice minister in parliament. Mugabe, by contrast, managed to maintain a front of politeness and reasonableness until well after he was entrenched in power.

Taboos change and evolve. Fifty years ago, homosexuality was illegal in the United Kingdom; today, a "homophobic" remark could cost you your job. It is very

likely that the current race taboo will die away in time and that people will be able to write about race without feeling guilty or nervous. By then, however, it will be far too late to help the white Zimbabweans who were left to be tortured and killed by Mugabe's regime. While that was happening, the world was far more concerned about Trent Lott's speculations about Strom Thurmond and a Conservative MP's joke about Chinese people in a bar.

Edward Dutton is a writer and lecturer, originally from London.

Letter From Hvar

by Mary Kohler

Withstanding the Fire

Three years ago, half of the long, narrow Croatian island of Hvar burned, including 200-year-old Mediterranean pines and much of the island's three major crops—lavender, grapes for wine, and olives. Fortunately, most of the larger towns and some of the villages were spared. Three firebombers tried valiantly, but the *bora* wind was so strong that, for three days, the fire raged. Finally, the wind dropped, and, in half an hour, the fire was extinguished, exposing the terraced hillsides and the enormous rock piles and thick rock walls that had been overgrown with trees and shrubs.

As in much of the world, people had been leaving the farms and villages, hoping that life in the mainland cities would be easier. Many actually found no employment and, instead, sit drinking coffee in dockside cafes, so they will be seen. The villages do not have many residents left; no one is tending the olive trees, and only a few are caring for the vines. All is overgrown and mostly abandoned.

Several hundred years ago, the Venetians sacked the island cities. People here say the fire was as bad as the Venetians. And perhaps it will happen again. Those who remain depend mostly on tourism. The bigger towns have hotels for package tours, and the big tour boats come to some, bringing shoppers during the day; but they are gone again for dinner aboard. Tomorrow, they will be on the next island.



Rock walls cascade down the untended hills of the island of Hvar, Croatia.

And here, on Hvar, no one is working the thousands of terraced fields, which, even where the fire burned, will be quickly overgrown, making fodder for another fire. Some think the conflagration started simply by the strong sunlight intensified somewhere. It was that hot summer in Europe that you read about, and everything was exceedingly dry. Perhaps it was a careless cigarette — there are many, many smokers here.

Whatever it was, peace had only recently come to Croatia after what they call “the last war.” How many disasters can one people stand? They have had many. This disaster is perhaps of their own making.

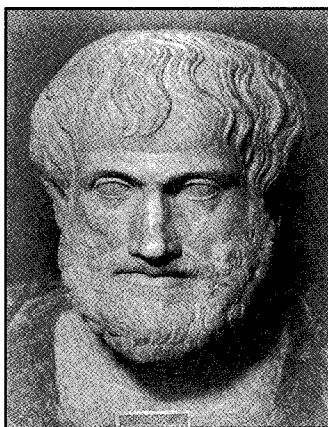
There is no fresh water on Hvar. Until very recent times brought a pipeline from the mainland, all water had to be collected in cisterns. Fishing and farming were hard work. There were few luxuries.

But Hvar is called the seventh loveliest island in the world, with many trees and flowers. The old stone houses are strong and handsome. There were and are many churches, even now active. We attended the cathedral on the Sunday after Easter. It was crowded with children, young people, parents and older folk, too, but mostly the young. All seven of the handsome marble altars had lovely fresh flowers. The interior looked newly painted. Years ago, it took real hunger to encourage folks to leave. But now some seem to want glamour.

There is a little hope. Summer residents are buying some of the empty homes. But they don’t till the fields. A few people are making wine again, partly for the tourist business, of varieties that have long been native to this island. So, on some of the terraces, the vines are budding out, starting a new vintage. The wine is good.

We see many mothers wheeling their children about. Perhaps more of these children will stay and decide to fish, or press olives and make wine, making the terraced hillsides neat and green again.

Mary Kohler is vice chairman of The Rockford Institute’s board of directors.



The Greek Conservative Mind

The Greeks invented political philosophy . . .
but not out of thin air

The ancient Greeks liberated themselves from the shackles of religion and tradition to pursue a dream of democracy, equality, and human rights. Right?

Wrong. We do well to remember the Greeks as they really were: their aristocratic pursuit of virtue, their general disdain for democracy, and their strong attachments to family and religion.

“The Greek Conservative Mind” is taught by Dr. Thomas Fleming, who is regarded as a leading authority on Greek lyric verse. Originally presented in the fall of 2004 as a lecture series at the Institute, the course now comprises 16 recorded lectures (on CD or audiotape) and a study guide with suggested readings, key terms, and discussion questions.

For more information, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811 or e-mail jkooistra@rockfordinstitute.org.



THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE

928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

Price: \$175.00

(Please indicate your choice of tapes or CDs)

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

A Position of Poverty

It is all very well, strolling arm in arm through the hothouse of gloriously mid-summer fiction, snatching a vermouth and bitters in the shadow by Fouquet's, hailing a taxi some gilded moments later; it is all very well when you have the money to get yourself to Paris, to pay for the perfumed drinks, to hire the purring motor. Ever tender, then, is the night of yours, with not a care in the world save how to pluck the petals off the daisy, odd, even, odd, until you just know she is crazy for the love of you.

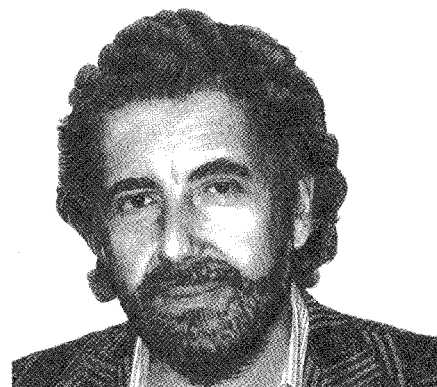
But surely poverty isn't the only thing. What of renal insufficiency, of facial eczema, of chronic indigestion? What of bad luck, which starts as the barely audible drip of isolated episodes of misfortune and then redounds on itself time and again, swelling like some gelid, bone-chilling phantasm until it becomes the flooding river of insuperable and irreversible error? What of old age, which is itself a streak of bad luck, though with the added disadvantage of its being calculable, like the force of gravity operating on objects positioned upon a sharply inclined plane?

And yet the affliction of stagnant destitution, when it is borne by one who has known rolling plenitude, is unique: more physical than acute disfigurement, more irresistible than advancing decrepitude, more paralyzing than most misfortune. Because, when all's said and done, every single one of the good things in life—health, beauty, luck—is a habit, or perhaps more accurately an addiction, and the forced and unexpected withdrawal from it cannot but strike one with all the disorienting power of hospital confinement. In an avowedly commercial civilization such as ours, money is akin to methadone. It is a universal substitute for nearly every object of life's addictions. It alone can restore to the sufferer the clustered illusions of mobility, virility, dignity, and all the other constituent elements of the *amour propre* that he had taken for granted, or perhaps cherished, but now has lost. To one who suddenly finds himself locked up in a padded cell, it alone can simulate the weightlessness of richly remembered liberty.

And, of course, life itself is an addic-

tion, as any gambling man knows when he knows he is losing. Hooked on youth, which they represent in assorted colors of the rainbow, he strokes the last of the ritual stacks of gaming chips that remain to him on the baize as though seeking some testimonial reassurance from these plastic markers, some tacit truce, some equivocal absolution. How manhood ebbs, like an account balance. How love slips away, like Solomon's agile bride from the grip of the palace guards. He fingers that last hard stack, rubbing it up and down as though it were a magic lamp whose subservient genius can arrest or reverse the passing of time, anxiously hedging his bets, staving off the inevitable, procrastinating and dissembling, telling porkies to himself and his conscience, until there arrives, as in the end it must, the moment of truth called impotence. How he clutches at those green chips! They are his last fix of springtime. How his lips move, unbeknownst to him, mouthing words that are numbers! Like as not, they are an ancient prayer for deliverance. Then harsh is the night beyond the casino doors, with not even a crumpled fiver for that telltale taxi home. Though what is home to him now, anyway? An urn for his ego's beloved remains, an empty violin case, a rotten walnut.

Solemnly, impoverishment is likened in the Kabbalah to the draining of blood through the severed arteries of a slaughtered animal, but then the Jews are an avowedly subjectivist, literal-minded people. Here, one need not speak from self-pity, nor hanker for the pity of others, because it is clear that the injustice of poverty, even of leprous, verminous poverty, is more than matched by that of obscene and profligate wealth. Besides, what does a man down on his luck, prevented by a movement of the markets from paying for two ridiculously overpriced cocktails, have to complain about to a survivor of the blockade of Leningrad? How much sympathy can he really muster, by tell-



ing of his sudden fall from manhood, in the hearts of the millions that populate whole continents, to say nothing of isolated regions, races and tribes? Severed arteries, indeed! Only a selfish, narrow-minded toff, insensible of any reality less concrete than the concrete of the city's pavements, can feel eviscerated by events when what is at stake is a few drops of pigeon blood.

And yet a person as unselfish and broad-minded as George Orwell confessed, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, that, in the socially shabby-genteel though materially warm-and-cosy stratum he had been born into, there was incomparably more consciousness of poverty than among the lower classes. "A shabby-genteel family is in much the same position as a family of 'poor whites' living in a street where everyone else is a negro," he wrote. "In such circumstances you have got to cling to your gentility because it is the only thing you have." Not by bread-and-dripping alone does man live, perhaps unfortunately, but by his whims, his caprices, and his fantasies. And so, by and by, as one follows the logic of the argument, is the city toff rehabilitated, if only slightly, in our eyes: His misfortune, though objectively less catastrophic than the Lisbon earthquake or the genocide of Armenians at the hands of the Turks, and which at first seems nothing but the surreal coupling of a crow's selfishness with a peacock's vanity, begins to acquire an objectivity and a poignancy whose anomalous issue, shabby-genteel and whimsical and capricious and fantasist yet only the more gloriously immanent for all that, is man. <C>

Purchase books, tapes, and CDs at

www.chroniclesmagazine.org

A Serious Third Party?

The looming amnesty of millions of illegal immigrants is deeply unpopular with millions of Americans, and for good reason: If the immigration bill the Senate passed in June gets through the House, this nation is finished. The bill would not only legalize some ten million illegal aliens but bring in five times that many—legally—over the next 20 years. Could this crisis provide the impetus for the creation of a political party capable of challenging the ruling duopoly?

Such a challenge is under way in Europe. After many false starts and dead ends dating back to the early 1970's, an ethnic-nationalist party capable of upsetting the establishmentarian Labour-Tory consensus has emerged. The British National Party (BNP) did very well in local elections last May and now holds 54 council seats across the country. In some areas—notably in East London—it has replaced Labour as the dominant political force among the ethnically British working- and lower-middle classes. According to the *Spectator*, working-class voters are switching to the BNP in such large numbers because they believe that it is the only political force that articulates what they are thinking: "Today's BNP possesses the local campaigning skills and ability to make a personal connection with the voter that mainstream parties have forgotten."

I spoke at some length with Nick Griffin, the BNP chairman, during his recent visit to the United States. He readily admits that he is still outside the pale of the current British establishment, but he is quick to add that he does not want to be there in the first place, because that establishment has presided over the decline of Britain to a point where she is being destroyed as a sovereign political entity. Her

traditional culture is being destroyed. The native peoples of Britain, according to our government figures, are going to become a minority in their own homeland somewhere between 2060 and the end of this century. The establishment which has done that while being paid out of our taxes, and which is putting in prison those

who complain about it, is not an establishment by which I wish to be considered respectable.

Griffin is against overseas military adventures, generally, and the war in Iraq, in particular.

We don't want to export our political system to the Third World, we don't believe in imposing our economic system by force, we don't believe in multi-culturalism, in *laissez-faire* economics domestically or "free trade" internationally. We don't believe in "propositional nations," and we don't seek to impose Western culture on the whole world.

Griffin describes the BNP as "ethno-nationalist" but adamantly rejects the "racist" label. He sees racism as ahistorical, abstract, materialist, and reductive in nature, devoid of any innate connection to real community ties, common culture and institutions. *Racism* has become a leftist cant term, he says, and now it can literally mean anything. He is quick to add, however, that we should not pretend that differences between ethnic and racial groups are negligible:

The ethno-nationalist position is to recognize that ethnic and cultural differences exist, that the best way to preserve the diversity of humanity and harmony within a community is to maintain as high a correlation as possible between the boundaries of ethnic groups and the boundaries of sovereign states. If you look around the world, the incidence of violence and strife is invariably high when this correlation between ethnic and national borders is low.

The problem in the West is that this negative correlation is increasing, and that problem is not confined to Britain, the United States, or any other single country or region. It is prevalent in all Western countries, even one so culturally and historically distinct as Spain—



where some want to remove the statue of St. James of Compostela, the "Moor Slayer," lest some Muslims feel offended. In Scandinavia, even feminist activists are reluctant to speak out against the epidemic of rapes of Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish women by Muslim immigrants. Despite all the differences in Western culture and civilization, Griffin says, it is in weakness that we detect common themes and common threads:

There's enough common cultural DNA to make us susceptible to the same viruses. We all have elites which are able to do the bidding of tiny interest groups and their demands for special "rights" and entitlements, because there's nothing to push back the other way. We have elites which have come to give their loyalty to their own class with its peculiar ideology, rather than their own people. It's ordinary people with very little voice in the society that suffer the consequences. It reflects a very ugly strand in the elite mind-set. The holier-than-thou, welfarist elite needs a permanently unhealthy, unstable society. The more discord, unhappiness, poverty, and helplessness there is in the society, the more power the elite will have. The more people you have who need help, the more fractured the society becomes, and the elite acquires more power and prestige, closing the circle; the larger the empire they build, the more civil servants they'll have under them, and the larger their pension. The worse it gets, the more tendency there is to make it even worse.

Our interview was posted on *Chroni-*

clesMagazine.org on June 8, and it triggered an interesting debate among our friends and readers on whether something similar may happen in the United States. One reader found especially striking Mr. Griffin's reference, in an article published on the BNP's website, to "a safety valve." "Those journalists and Establishment commentators," writes Griffin,

who are seeking to demonise and shut down the BNP safety valve—taking our words out of context and attributing to us thoughts, aims and tactics that we simply do not have—are playing an unbelievably dangerous game. Either they are ignorant of the real and potentially fatal tensions on the streets, or they simply don't care about what happens out there in the real world.

We do, because we know those streets. Our people live on those streets, and we don't want to see them go up in flames.

The irony of liberals carping about the nationalist right, our reader opined, is that, if liberals' worst fears actually did come true, and some blood-hungry fanatical-right regime came to power, the elites would have no one but themselves to blame for having suppressed the voices and ignored the concerns of ordinary people until the situation finally reaches a critical mass, the pendulum of human folly swings in the other direction, and we witness some sort of collapse into tribal barbarism.

A regular contributor to our writebacks who goes by the name of Carolus believes that the elites have made a fatal miscalculation by casting their lot with Islam:

While I must admit there would be certain grim poetic justice in seeing Tony Blair's severed head held aloft by a screaming jihadi, I expect that Blair has already made careful plans either to escape just before the imams seize total control or serve as a "court Jew" in the new caliphate. Still, the Muslims just don't seem to have much impulse control. They might not be able to resist.

As Carolus observes, one problem that cannot be overcome by any amount of strategy or dedication is one of demographics. We can play the field absolute-

ly perfectly and still lose, if we don't have enough players:

You can't have a revival when the people you are trying to revive simply don't exist. There are probably a fair number on both the left and right who cannot be "woken up" for the simple reason that we would be appealing to principles that they flat-out do not value—rather like showing Tony Blair a future English caliphate. This is one of the reasons I have reservations about getting into arguments with Republicans. I expect a lot of the Republicans of the country-club or military-industrial-complex variety would—if you finally, incontrovertibly proved to them that neoconservatism was actually a form of liberalism—announce: "Oh. OK. Well, then, I guess I'm a liberal."

Several readers, Red Phillips among them, agreed with the diagnosis but want to fight that battle anyway, because we need to redefine the baseline of the debate:

If all that people hear is two guys fighting over a faster or slower rate of growth, then people are going to assume that is the only debate. There needs to be a voice saying "perhaps we actually ought to cut spending." There is that voice now; it is just small. Much of the problem lies in the fact that the left, thanks to their now-completed "long march through the institutions," have managed to control the very frame of the political debate such as it is.

Several correspondents have noted that Griffin's criticism of the Conservative Party in Britain could, with equal validity, be directed at the GOP:

By portraying themselves as a party that isn't really comfortable with mass immigration, with multicul-

turalism, with the destruction of Western values, and by just hinting that they are the party that might do something about it, they've been able to persuade huge numbers of Britons who are very concerned about these issues that those concerns would be addressed if they vote Conservative. In this way, they've acted as a roadblock for any new political force to come forth and say, "This is an issue that really matters." The fact that the Tory Party was there masquerading as the party of patriotism and the maintenance of traditional values and national identity merely acted as a major obstacle for anyone else concerned about those issues. In addition, corporate interests—traditionally influential within the Conservative Party—are to blame for encouraging the trend that secures a steady supply of cheap labor.

Such similarities notwithstanding, there exists a broad consensus among our readers that there is unlikely to be a successful "nationalist" challenge to the *status quo* in the United States—mainly because America does not have an ethnically unified population. According to a correspondent from New York who goes by the name of Robert Locke,

The *sine qua non* of ethnonationalism is an *ethnos* to base it on. This is something American rightists, who think ideology is abstract, and one can just choose to embrace any ideology simply by deciding to, often just don't get.

Europeans, by contrast, understand that the *ethnos*, not the race, has to be the foundational postulate of any patriotic political movement. Race is important, they contend, but only because it is one defining characteristic among many. A society that is not held together by natural solidarities will either fall apart or lean more heavily on artificial means—economic power, political tyranny, or religious fanaticism. ◊

To Subscribe:

call (800) 877-5459 or visit

www.ChroniclesMagazine.org

THE SERVILE STATE

Why I Am Not a Socialist

by G.K. Chesterton

Though Chesterton disliked socialism intensely, he did not regard it as the most serious danger facing Western civilization. Writing in 1925, he describes the socialist state as something "centralized, impersonal, and monotonous" but suggests that this is also an accurate description of the societies in the modern industrialized West that regard themselves as enemies of socialism. The coming peril was something Chesterton called "standardization by a low standard," and that danger was as much a characteristic of the West as it was of the Soviet East. The next great heresy, Chesterton insisted, was not Bolshevism but an attack on morality, especially sexual morality. The locus of that attack would not be in Moscow but in Manhattan. Hence the paradox: In one sense, socialism represented a fantasy that could never be fully realized; in another, it represented an evil that was already present. "It is," he writes, "only a thing that is as distant as the end of the world and as near as the end of the street."

Perhaps the best summary of Chesterton's critique of socialism is found in his contribution to a debate that took place in 1908 in the pages of an influential London socialist weekly called the New Age. The protagonists in the debate were Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, and Belford Bax as spokesmen for socialism, and Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc as its critics. In this piece, Chesterton presents an outline of the social philosophy that came to be known as distributism. The underlying distributist idea is the need for private property as a guarantee of human freedom and of human dignity. Chesterton claims to be speaking for ordinary people whose deepest needs are ignored by both the socialists and the defenders of corporate capitalism.

—Fr. Ian Boyd, C.S.B.

I have been asked to give some exposition of how far and for what reason a

man who has not only a faith in democracy, but a great tenderness for revolution, may nevertheless stand outside the movement commonly called socialism. If I am to do this, I must make two prefatory remarks. The first is a short platitude; the second is a rather long personal explanation. But they both have to be stated before we get on to absolute doctrines, which are the most important things in the world.

The terse and necessary truism is the same as that with which Mr. Belloc opened his article in this paper. It is the expression of ordinary human disgust at the industrial system. To say that I do not like the present state of wealth and poverty is merely to say I am not a devil in human form. No one but Satan or Beelzebub could like the present state of wealth and poverty. But the second point is rather more personal and elaborate; and yet I think that it will make things clearer to explain it. Before I come to the actual proposal of collectivism, I want to say something about the atmosphere and implication of those proposals. Before I say anything about socialism, I should like to say something about socialists.

I will confess that I attach much more importance to men's theoretical arguments than to their practical proposals. If you will, I attach more importance to what is said than to what is done; what is said generally lasts much longer and has much more influence. I can imagine no change worse for public life than that which some prigs advocate, that debate should be curtailed. A man's arguments show what he is really up to. Until you have heard the defense of a proposal, you do not really know even the proposal. Thus, for instance, if a man says to me, "Taste this temperance drink," I have merely doubt slightly tinged with distaste. But if he says, "Taste it, because your wife would make a charming widow," then I decide. Or, again, suppose a man offers a new gun to the British navy, and ends up his speech with the fine peroration, "And after all, since Frenchmen are our brothers, what matters it whether they win or no," then again I decide. I could decide to have the man shot with his own gun, if I could. In short, I would be openly moved in my choice of an institution, not by its immediate proposals for practice, but very much by its incidental, even

its accidental, allusion to ideals. I judge many things by their parentheses.

Now, I wish to say first that socialistic idealism does not attract me very much, even as idealism. The glimpses it gives of our future happiness depress me very much. They do not remind me of any actual human happiness, of any happy day that I have ever myself spent. No doubt there are many socialists who feel this, and there are many who will reply that it has nothing to do with the actual proposal of socialism. But my point here is that I do admit such allusive elements into my choice. I will take one instance of the kind of thing I mean. Almost all socialist utopias make the happiness or at least the altruistic happiness of the future chiefly consist in the pleasure of sharing, as we share a public park or the mustard at a restaurant. This, I say, is the commonest sentiment in socialist writing. Socialists are collectivist in their proposals. But they are communist in their idealism. Now there is a real pleasure in sharing. We have all felt it in the case of nuts off a tree or the National Gallery, or such things. But it is not the only pleasure, nor the only altruistic pleasure, nor (I think) the highest or most human of altruistic pleasures. I greatly prefer the pleasure of giving and receiving. Giving is not the same as sharing; Giving is even the opposite of sharing. Sharing is based on the idea that there is no property, or at least no personal property. But giving a thing to another man is as much based on personal property as keeping it to yourself. If, after some universal interchange of generosity, everyone was wearing someone else's hat, that state of things would still be based upon private property.

Now, I speak quite seriously and sincerely when I say that I, for one, should greatly prefer that world in which everyone wore someone else's hat to every socialist utopia that I have ever read about. It is better than sharing one hat, anyhow. Remember, we are not talking now about the modern problem and its urgent solution; for the moment, we are talking only about the ideal—what we would have if we could get it. And if I were a poet writing a utopia, if I were a magician waving a wand, if I were a god making a planet, I would deliberately make it a world of give and take, rather than a world of sharing. I do not wish Jones and Brown to share

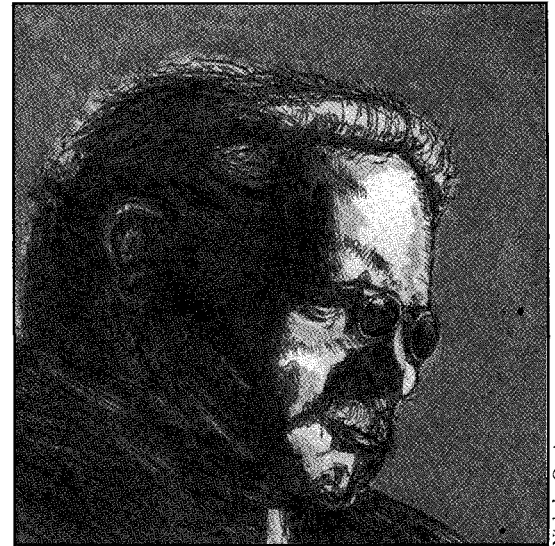
the same cigar box; I do not want it as an ideal; I do not want it as a very remote ideal; I do not want it at all. I want Jones, by one mystical and godlike act, to give a cigar to Brown, and Brown, by another mystical and godlike act, to give a cigar to Jones. Thus it seems to me, instead of one act of fellowship (of which the memory would slowly fade), we should have a continual play and energy of new acts of fellowship keeping up the circulation of society. Now I have read some tons or square miles of socialist eloquence in my time, but it is literally true that I have never seen any serious allusion to or clear consciousness of this creative altruism of personal giving. For instance, in the many utopian pictures of comrades feasting together, I do not remember one that had the note of hospitality, of the difference between host and guest and the difference between one house and another. No one brings up the port that his father laid down; no one is proud of the pears grown in his own garden. In the less non-conformist utopias there is, indeed, the recognition of traditional human liquor; but I am not speaking of drink, but of that yet nobler thing, "standing drink."

Keep in mind, please, the purpose of this explanation. I do not say that these gifts and hospitalities would not happen in a collectivist state. I do say that they do not happen in a collectivist's instinctive visions of that state; I do not say these things would not occur under socialism. I say they do not occur to socialists. I know quite well that your immediate answer will be, "Oh, but there is nothing in the socialist proposal to prevent personal gift." That is why I explain thus elaborately that I attach less importance to the proposal than to the spirit in which it is proposed. When a great revolution is made, it is seldom the fulfilment of its own exact formula; but it is almost always in the image of its own impulse and feeling for life. Men talk of unfulfilled ideals. But the ideals are fulfilled, because spiritual life is renewed. What is not fulfilled, as a rule, is the business prospectus. Thus the Revolution has not established in France any of the strict constitutions it planned out; but it has established in France the spirit of 18th-century democracy, with its cool reason, its bourgeois dignity, its well-distributed but very private wealth, its universal minimum of good manners. Just so, if socialism is established, you may not fulfil your practical proposal. But you will certainly fulfil your ideal vision. And I confess that, if you have forgotten these

important human matters in the telling of a leisurely tale, I think it very likely that you will forget them in the scurry of a social revolution. You have left certain human needs out of your books; you may leave them out of your republic.

Now, I happen to hold a view which is almost unknown among socialists, anarchists, liberals, and conservatives.

I believe very strongly in the mass of the common people. I do not mean in their "potentialities"; I mean in their faces, in their habits, and their admirable language. Caught in the trap of a terrible industrial machinery, harried by a shameful economic cruelty, surrounded with an ugliness and desolation never endured before among men, stunted by a stupid and provincial religion, or by a more stupid and more provincial irreligion, the poor are still by far the sanest, jolliest, and most reliable part of the community. Whether they agree with socialism as a narrow proposal is difficult to discover. They will vote for socialists as they will for Tories and Liberals, because they want certain things, or don't want them. But one thing I should affirm as certain, the whole smell and sentiment and general ideal of socialism they detest and disdain. No part of the community is so specially fixed in those forms and feelings which are opposite to the tone of most socialists: the privacy of homes, the control of one's own children, the minding of one's own business. I look out of my back windows over the black stretch of Battersea, and I believe I could make up a sort of creed, a catalogue of maxims, which I am certain are believed, and believed strongly, by the overwhelming mass of men and women as far as the eye can reach. For instance, that an Englishman's house is his castle, and that awful proprieties ought to regulate admission to it; that marriage is a real bond, making jealousy and marital revenge at the least highly pardonable; that vegetarianism and all pitting of animal against human rights is a silly fad; that, on the other hand, to save money to give yourself a fine funeral is not a silly fad, but a symbol of ancestral self-respect; that, when giving treats to friends or children, one should give them what they like, emphatically not what is good for them; that there is nothing illogical in being furious because Tommy had been coldly caned by a schoolmistress and then throwing saucepans at him yourself. All these things they believe; they are the only people who do believe them; and they are absolutely and eternally right. They



Nicholas Carrie

are the ancient sanities of humanity; the ten commandments of man.

Now I wish to point out to you that, if you impose your socialism on these people, it will in moral actuality be an imposition and nothing else; just as the creation of Manchester industrialism was an imposition and nothing else. You may get them to give a vote for socialism; so did the Manchester individualists get them to give votes for Manchester. But they do not believe in the socialist ideal any more than they ever believed in the Manchester ideal; they are too healthy to believe in either. But while they are healthy, they are also vague, slow, bewildered, and unaccustomed, alas, to civil war. Individualism was imposed on them by a handful of merchants; socialism will be imposed on them by a handful of decorative artists and Oxford dons and journalists and countesses on the Spree. Whether, like every other piece of oligarchic humbug in recent history, it is done with a parade of ballot boxes interests me very little. The moral fact is that the democracy definitely dislikes your favorite philosophy, but may accept it like so many others, rather than take the trouble to resist.

Thinking thus, as I do, socialism does not hold the field for me as it does for others. My eyes are fixed on another thing altogether, a thing that may move or not; but which, if it does move, will crush socialism with one hand and landlordism with the other. They will destroy landlordism, not because it is property, but because it is the negation of property. It is the negation of property that the duke of Westminster should own whole streets and squares of London; just as it would be the negation of marriage if he had all

living women in one great harem. If ever the actual poor move to destroy this evil, they will do it with the object not only of giving every man private property but, very specially, private property; they will probably exaggerate in that direction; for in that direction is the whole humor and poetry of their own lives. For the Revolution, if they make it, there will be all the features which they like and I like: the strong sense of English cosiness, the instinct for special festival, the distinction between the dignities of man and woman, responsibility of a man under his roof. If you make the Revolution, it will be marked by all the things that democracy detests and I detest: the talk about the inevitable, the love of statistics, the materialist theory of history, the trivialities of sociology, and the uproarious folly of eugenics. I know the answer you have; I know the risk I run. Perhaps democracy will never move. Perhaps the English people, if you gave it beer enough, would accept even eugenics. It is enough for me for the moment to say that I cannot believe it. The poor are so obviously right, I cannot fancy that they will never enforce their rightness against all the prigs of your party and mine. At any rate, that is my answer. I am not a socialist, just as I am not a Tory; because I have not lost faith in democracy.

G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) was a playwright, poet, novelist, journalist, editor, theologian, philosopher, and Christian apologist. Fr. Ian Boyd, C.S.B., is the editor of the Chesterton Review.

COMMONWEAL

Death and Life of a Great Urban Thinker

by Steven Greenhut

The death on April 25 at the age of 89 of Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and several other books, has already set off a debate over her legacy. Admirers from the New Urbanist movement see her primarily as an advocate for compact, vibrant cities. They cite Jacobs as inspiration for their war against urban sprawl. These folks have been the ones mostly called upon to eulogize her, and the casual observer would be left to think that she was one of them.

Others—myself included—recognize that Jacobs was, of course, an advocate for urban life, compact cities, and other things the New Urbanists promote but believe her biggest legacy is one of standing up for the average urban citizen against the coercive designs of city officials, planners, architects, and bureaucrats. She was, first and foremost, an advocate for freedom and individual decisionmaking. Her blasts against government planners are as stinging as those written by Ayn Rand, although they display a subtlety that Rand could never master and an understanding of community that Rand could not grasp.

In 1961, when Jacobs wrote *Death and*

Life, the big planning fads of the day were those advanced by the likes of New York planner Robert Moses. The poor should not be forced to live in ugly tenements, with their kids playing in the streets. They shouldn't have to endure the awfulness of crowded streetscapes with too few parks and a mixture of business and residential uses. The planners knew that what the poor needed was lots of open space, modern apartment buildings, and residential areas cordoned off from the unseemly world of commerce. Big, broad boulevards and freeways were in, as were tall, Bauhaus-style office buildings and unadorned housing blocks.

Today, we all shake our heads in dismay at urban renewal. I remember the fruits of it back East, where public housing was plopped in the middle of settled ethnic neighborhoods, where poor but vibrant areas were cleared away by bulldozers to make way for new offices. Some activists referred to urban renewal as "Negro removal." I recall one Eastern city where a couple of old buildings stood amid a sea of government parking lots, with most of the city's downtown destroyed—all thanks to the planners and their powers of subsidy, eminent domain, and central planning.

Many older cities saw their downtowns obliterated as four-lane freeways blasted through the neighborhoods, often blocking the waterfronts from the streetscape. Urban renewal, the epitome of top-down government planning, was a disaster that wrecked countless communities, many of which have never recovered.

Jacobs was at first something of a gadfly in her hometown of New York City. The *Los Angeles Times* obituary recalls the incident in which Robert Moses announced a plan to put a freeway through Washington Square in Manhattan, and Jacobs and other protesters rushed the podium. The *Times* cites an AP interview in which Jacobs recounts the imperious Moses arrogantly dismissing those who opposed the destruction of their neighborhood as "a bunch of mothers!" (How dare a group of mere mothers stand up against the designs of the elite!)

In *Death and Life*, Jacobs describes an interview with the residents of an East Harlem housing project. Officials couldn't understand why the tenants particularly despised the rectangular lawn at the project. Then one articulate tenant revealed:

"Nobody cared what we wanted when they built this place. They threw our houses down and

LIBERAL ARTS

PRESIDENT EXPECTED TO REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

"*With This Ring*, the world's first magazine catering to every kind of wedding—be that same sex, interracial, or interfaith—continues with Launch [sic] plan despite obvious lack of support from White House.

"President Bush is slated to strongly [sic] reaffirm his opposition to gay marriage today and once again attempt to push through a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union solely between a man and a woman, putting yet another obstacle in the way for those interested in same sex marriage.

"Jonathon Scott Feit, Chief Editor and Publisher of *With This Ring* magazine, says that 'President Bush is, once again, out of touch with the pulse of the people he is supposed to represent.' . . .

"*With This Ring* will be the first-ever bridal publication to broaden the scope of the traditional 'White Wedding' and reach—both from an editorial and advertising standpoint—an open-minded audience that views same sex couples, interfaith couples, interracial couples and even couples looking for a non-traditional wedding as fundamentally equal."

—from a press release for *With This Ring*, by Rachel Cone-Gorham

pushed us here and pushed our friends somewhere else. We don't have a place around here to get a cup of coffee or a newspaper even, or to borrow 50 cents. Nobody cared what we need. But the big men come and look at that grass and say, Isn't it wonderful! Now the poor have everything!"

This tenant was saying what moralists have said for thousands of years: Handsome is as handsome does. All that glitters is not gold.

She was saying more: There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served.

My favorite quotation from *Death and Life* is: "As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge." Jacobs was writing about the Garden City, British designer Ebenezer Howard's conception of a new kind of town, based around small villages. Such towns have a form that many of us find appealing, but there is more to the life of cities than their form, as Jacobs understood.

Yes, form is important. She wrote about the old Italian neighborhood in Boston, with its crowded streets, apartments above storefronts, and lack of parks. She loved the vibrancy of the neighborhood but wrote about how the planners at Harvard and elsewhere were aghast because Boston's North End lacked all the things that smart people believed neighborhoods should have. That meant big parks, the separation of stores from homes—the sorts of things that led to awful urban-renewal projects and drove planning ideas in suburbia, where neighborhoods are cordoned off from churches and stores, where every shopping center is designed to handle the number of cars that might visit on a busy Christmas-shopping-season evening. Fortunately, the planners never got their way, and the North End is a highlight of Boston.

Now, however, planners have swung in the opposite direction. They believe that they have embraced the spirit of Jane Jacobs because they want to use the same central-planning powers to require cities to build Jacobs-approved features, such as houses with front porches and only small yards so that kids are forced to play on the

street. The Smart Growthers and New Urbanists gladly use eminent domain to condemn older suburban areas in order to replace them with the types of New Towns they like. In Brea, California, for instance, the city bulldozed its old downtown and built a decidedly New Urbanist downtown. But the old downtown, like older downtowns in other nearby cities, had a sense of quirkiness and vibrancy. The new downtown is totally corporate and fake. Sure, the new houses have design features from the past, but the main street is basically a bunch of fancy subsidized movie theaters, and the stores are chains that people can find anywhere. Folks crowd the area to go to the movie theaters and nearby restaurants, but the place has no soul, no life, no sense of adventure. Only the planners in charge have the right to decide which businesses go where. In real cities, anyone can open a business; anyone can pursue his dreams. As Jacobs wrote, "All that glitters is not gold."

Remembering Jacobs, Leonard Gilroy of the libertarian Reason Foundation wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that,

Sadly, many in the Smart Growth and New Urbanism movements cite Jacobs as the inspiration for their efforts to combat so-called "urban sprawl" and make over suburbia with dense, walkable downtowns, mixed-use development, and varied building styles.

But Gilroy notes that,

While Jacobs identified these as organic elements of successful cities, planners have eagerly tried to impose them on cities in formulaic fashion, regardless of their contextual appropriateness and compatibility with the underlying economic order.

Exactly. Jacobs knew what made cities great. Not central planning, not subsidies and highfalutin architectural designs: It was ordinary people, pursuing their lives in their own ways. It was the churches and homes and small businesses. As she noted, cities have an "intricate social and economic order" that wells up from the bottom but cannot be imposed from the top. The elites do more damage than good when they try to create utopias. These are the real lessons from Jacobs. And, as she wrote in the last line of *Death and Life*, "[L]ively, diverse, intense cities contain

the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves."

Steven Greenhut, senior editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register in Santa Ana, California, is the author of *Abuse of Power: How the Government Misuses Eminent Domain*.

IMMIGRATION

A Liberal Policy

by Joe Prussing

In regard to the recent controversy over illegal immigration, allow me to offer a few liberal proposals.

The problem could be easily and immediately solved by putting all illegal aliens to work constructing a wall across the entire southern border. (They make up 25 percent of the construction industry, anyway.) And, at below minimum wages, what a bargain! But I'm afraid the ACLU and 12 million other illegal aliens just wouldn't see the humor, or irony, in it.

As a prerequisite to citizenship, we could have all aliens (legal or otherwise) serve a minimum of two years in the U.S. Armed Forces. Not only would that help us fight the "War on Terror," but it would help protect our own borders—which, by the way, is what the military is supposed to be doing.

Or we could just do what Mexico does: Outlaw all immigration; close our borders; punish the bad guys; ban all protests; and throw anyone who disagrees with us in jail. But wait! Isn't that what's causing the problem to begin with—the Mexican government? Oh, well, so much for NAFTA.

And last but not least, we should consider "profiling" all illegal immigrants and allow only the good-looking and smart ones to come in. Hey, we already have a surplus of ugly and stupid people. The smart ones, of course, will work hard, pay taxes, have kids, and send them to public school, where they can learn, among other things, that Davy Crockett was a war criminal, Texas was stolen from Mexico, and the rest of us are racists. And the good-looking ones... well, who cares what they do? As long as they look good doing it and can still mow our lawns. ¡Si, se puede!

Joe Prussing writes from Port St. Lucie, Florida.

Leonardo's Little Joke

At one point in *The Da Vinci Code*, the marvelously funny movie based on Dan Brown's as nearly hilarious novel, Sophie Neveu (Audrey Tautou), renowned cryptologist for the Direction Centrale Police Judiciaire in Paris, and Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks), Harvard's world-famous professor of religious symbology, stumble onto what just may be "the greatest cover-up in human history." It seems that a secret society known as the Priory of Sion, a.k.a. the Keepers, has been safeguarding this "truth" since A.D. 1099. If divulged, it would "devastate the foundations of Christianity." So what in bejesus is this truth? Simply this: Christ and Mary Magdalene were lovers. After his crucifixion, she absconded to France—where else?—and gave birth to their daughter, Sarah. Furthermore, this began a bloodline that reaches down to the present day. Upon learning this, Sophie looks at Robert, her eyes wide with cryptological astonishment, and asks, "Is it possible?" Robert pauses for a solemnly judicious moment before replying, "It's not impossible." In the science of symbology, possibility is all.

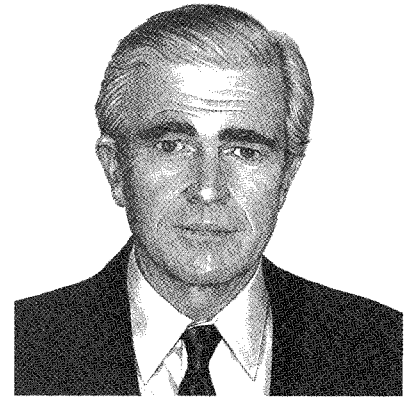
This being a gnostic narrative, Robert's answer has a subtext. The initiate can easily divine its hidden meaning. I make no pretense to being an initiate myself, but I think I can guess the message. Before doing so, however, a warning: In what follows, I have felt compelled to reveal several hidden "truths." If you have any intention of seeing "DVC," as it is familiarly known, you might want to stop reading here. You can always return to my reflections once you have beheld their source.

Let's come back, then, to Sophie's question. Robert's careful answer reveals what is none other than the long-standing narrative method of Akiva Goldsman, the film's scriptwriter, and Ron Howard, its director. Both are past masters of the "not-impossible" school of filmmaking. You'll find this approach vividly on display in their earlier collaborations, *A Beautiful Mind* and *Cinderella Man*. In both films, plain facts bow

before the not-impossible.

A Beautiful Mind portrayed Princeton's mad mathematical genius John Nash as a man trapped in a paranoid delusion of a right-wing hysteria, imagining himself an FBI commie code breaker. But a little fact checking—by which I mean reading Sylvia Nascar's biography of the same title on which the film is based—proves that, far from hunting reds, he joined them. Nash took a leftist powder and defect-ed to East Germany. At first, the worker's paradise greeted him enthusiastically, but, two weeks later, the communists unceremoniously kicked him out. Apparently, serious-minded communists were not enchanted by his antics. So why did Goldsman and Howard falsify the record? Apparently, the political drift of the facts was not to their liking. If Nash was to be the film's hero of psychic regeneration, it wouldn't do to show him recovering from a case of advanced communist admiration. How much more satisfying to have him recover from right-wing delusions! It's not impossible, is it?

In *Cinderella Man*, the Goldsman-Howard team smeared heavyweight boxer Max Baer, portraying him as a sadistic thug who reveled in his reputation as a killer in the ring. This characterization also flouts the truth. One man, Frankie Campbell, did die after meeting Baer in the ring. The referee allowed the fight to continue well after Campbell was incapable of defending himself properly. Far from exulting over Campbell's death, Baer was so devastated, he quit boxing for a time. Returning to the ring, he was so afraid of hurting his opponents that, to the exasperation of his manager and his fans, he routinely let up on them when they gave signs of being in trouble, a foolhardy practice, especially in the heavyweight division. None of this troubled the not-impossible boys. They needed a villain to make their hero, James Braddock, look noble by comparison, so they slandered Baer, making him the sneering, murderous thug we see in their film.



The Da Vinci Code

Produced by Columbia Pictures

Directed by Ron Howard

Screenplay by Akiva Goldsman

from the novel by Dan Brown

Distributed by Sony Pictures

Given their track record, we can see why Goldsman and Howard jumped on Brown's not-impossible novel. It opens a whole new vista for them: "symbology." What is symbology? You remember the English professor you had in college, the one who argued that the fishing lines Santiago used to pull in the giant swordfish in *The Old Man and the Sea* were to be understood symbolically. They stood for the pencils Papa Hemingway was using to land the great American novel. The swordfish, gnostically understood, is the text, and the sharks who tear away at the big fish before Santiago can get it ashore are the critics. That's symbology. Anything can be made to mean anything else. How could Goldsman and Howard resist?

In the film's opening sequence, we see symbology in action. Langdon is giving a lecture in which he argues that "symbols are a language that can help us understand our past." After breezing through a slide show of famous symbols—including, oddly enough, the crucifix and swastika back to back—he turns to his audience and asks rhetorically, "How do we sift truth from belief?" This is Brown's "open sesame." Only he sifted apocrypha from truth. Then, making the "not-impossible" his watchword, he concocted a whopper of a best-seller.

Unfortunately, the not-impossible narrative often wanders into the demonstrably fake. A cottage industry of scholarly debunking has grown up around Brown's novel. Theologians of every Christian

Read more movie reviews at

www.ChroniclesMagazine.org

and Hebraic persuasion have documented its absurdities. Many of these treatises are compelling. Darrell Bock's *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* is a good place to start. For me, however, it's the bloodline claim that did it. The narrative expects us to suspend our disbelief to accommodate the notion that, across 2,000 years, Christ's progeny would come down to just one young woman who, by the way, doesn't look Semitic at all. (Of course, over a 2,000-year lineage, some exogamous wandering is to be expected.) And, revelation of revelations, the descendant turns out to be none other than our Sophie, as incarnated by the elfin Tautou. But wait a minute. Wouldn't we expect more descendants from this bloodline? My rocket-scientist son-in-law, John Williams, did some calculations. On the wildly conservative assumption that each of Christ's supposed descendants averaged a fertility-challenged 1.3 children in each of the 57 generations since, say, A.D. 33, the extended Holy Family would number nearly a million alive today. And how would they be detectable? Brown and the film give us some mumbo-jumbo about the possibility of getting DNA from the remains of Mary Magdalene. This leads Sophie and Robert on a wild search for her tomb that had, as everyone knows, been bounced all over Europe by the Knights Templar, who were able to use it to blackmail the Church hierarchy in the Middle Ages before some pope had them all slaughtered. It seems that the Roman Church was sensitive on the matter. They were not about to allow the Templars to blow a good thing by informing Christendom of their Savior's marriage. Nor would they countenance any recognition of Christ's issue. So, since at least the second century, the Church has conspired to keep the secret from the faithful. And, more than the fact of the marriage, they needed to prevent news of how they suppressed the "sacred feminine" in Catholic culture. You see, Mary was a proto-feminist who, as Christ's consort, was the Church's true founder, something that distressed the chauvinist male Apostles and their institutional descendants to no end. (Odd, then, their steadfast veneration of the other Mary.) To cover all this up, they deployed a search-and-destroy mission to eliminate Jesus' progeny—a mission that continues to our time. This is where their militant wing, Opus Dei, comes in. I bet you didn't know that Opus Dei is really the Church's CIA, a supersecret agen-

cy with headquarters cleverly hidden on Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. Chillingly, the members are all verifiably pre-Vatican II conservative Catholics. They claim to be doing Christ's work in the world when, in fact, they are black baggers enforcing Church doctrine at the end of a gun. You know they are really sinister because, when making cell-phone calls, they speak in Latin. Sends a shiver down your spine, doesn't it?

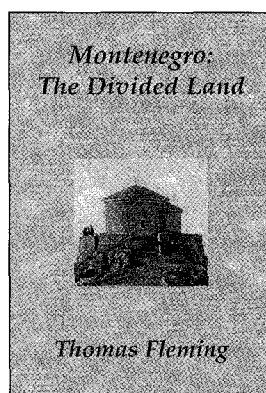
Fortunately, the Priory of Sion has been defending the issue of Jesus and Mary for as long as they have been hunted by the Church. One of their past members was Leonardo Da Vinci, who cleverly encoded the secret in 1498 when he painted one of his more obscure canvases, *The Last Supper*. But that's not all. Step by stealthy step, Sophie and Langdon discover a raft of other irresistibly chic symbols, codes, and anagrams that lead them closer and closer to the "truth." Still, they need Sir Ian McKellan to cross the *t*'s and dot the *i*'s. McKellan is Sir Leigh Teabing (or is that Teabag?), and he's an even bigger know-it-all windbag than Langdon. It is he who fruitily informs them that the Holy Grail that everyone's been searching for over the last 2,000 years is actually not a chalice but the womb of Mary Magdalene. Got that? Were this let out, the Church would have to acknowledge the reality of the sacred feminine. In consequence, the world would turn away from war to peace and take up communal quilting. You can see how crucial it is to hide this truth.

If the bloodline improbability does not clinch matters, perhaps the Priory of Sion will. In his prefatory notes to the novel, Brown states as fact that the Priory goes back to A.D. 1099 and includes among its leading members not only Leonardo but also Sandro Botticelli, Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton, Victor Hugo, and (my favorite) Jean Cocteau. This is odd, since there is documented evidence that the Priory was founded in 1956 by one Pierre Plantard and some friends. Originally, it was supposed to be a gag. Plantard got the name from Col du Mont Sion in France, not Mount Sion in Jerusalem. Later, he decided to fake records for the Priory to make it look as if it started in the Middle Ages, so that he could claim he descended from the Merovingian dynasty. He wanted to confer a little royal cachet on an out-of-the-way hotel he owned near the town of St. Julien. M. Plantard, as one would imagine, has done time.

Does anything more need to be said?

Just this: At the end of the film, when it becomes clear that they will not be able to prove her sacred lineage, Robert explains to the disconsolate Sophie, "The only thing that really matters is what you believe." Sounds excessively American to me. But the kicker is still to come: Robert goes on to speculate that "maybe the human is the divine." Well, that knocks everything into a cocked miter, doesn't it?

And you wondered at the phenomenal take the novel and film have been enjoying. It has always paid to flatter the masses. ◊



Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Paperback Price \$19.95

(\$16.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling)

This Time, Be Prepared

The Serb land of Montenegro is once again at the crossroads of history. The blood-soaked mountains and dramatic coastline of this small land have been fought over by Illyrians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Venetians, and, in the 20th century, by the armies of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany. In World War II, Montenegro lost more men, per capita, than any nation of Europe, and now it is the latest target of the so-called international community, which has tried to create a phony separatist movement (complete with a bogus national church) to continue the disastrous policies that have involved the United States in wars over Bosnia and Kosovo.

Thomas Fleming has written the first well-researched history of Montenegro in the English language, taking the story from ancient times all the way up to the current crisis over separation from Serbia. This is no dry academic tome but a lively account of a brave people whose brave history rivals the tales of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae.

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

Noche de Desastre

The morning after meeting Juanito Villalobos, Héctor, throwing Dr. Spock's strictures to the wind, put his foot down when Dubya demanded to be taken to the Lion Habitat immediately after the family's return from breakfast at McDonald's. His patience was suddenly at an end. Although the Habitat itself was free, the Villas' suite by now was overpopulated with a collection of expensive stuffed lions in varying sizes, from Metro to something hardly bigger than a rat. AveMaría and Contracepción, both of whom had plans of their own for the day, were similarly disinclined to spend it hanging around a zoo exhibit, however elaborate. In response to being denied lions, Dubya threw a temper tantrum and had to be shut in the bathroom until he got control of himself, while Héctor made his escape under cover of the confusion. Let the women trade the kid off between them for the rest of the day: *He'd done his duty*, and more, since their arrival in Las Vegas. *¡Vivo jo!* Héctor assured himself happily, as he strode from the elevator and across the hotel lobby in the direction of the casino, close by the entertainment dome.

He was hurrying past the entrance to the Lion Habitat when an unpleasantly familiar voice called his name. Héctor turned and saw Juanito Villalobos following behind him, in uniform and carrying a broom on his shoulder. He considered cutting him and found he hadn't the heart to be rude to the *typo*, after all, despite having determined overnight to decline the offer of drinks this evening.

"*¡Eh, compadrito! ¿Cómo está? And where is your little boy today, amigo? He has lost interest in my beautiful lions so soon?*"

Héctor sighed. Would he never have time alone in which to enjoy his much-needed and better-deserved vacation?

"The kid's with his mom this morning," he said shortly, "and I'm on my way to have a little fun, myself."

Juanito's sly grin spread nearly as wide as his broad, pockmarked face. "*Ciertamente, hermano. It is safer that way than to hire a babysitter—much. You know where your wife is, but she knows nothing of where you are!*"

Héctor began to be nervous. The thought of what Juanito implied made him feel compromised, dirty, and insecure, at risk of some vague catastrophe.

"My wife doesn't care what I do," he said defensively, "so long as I don't go in the hole more than a couple hundred dollars."

"It seems you have a good wife," Juanito observed, knowingly. "Better than most. For some women, even a cocktail waitress is cause for jealousy. And so, tonight, we have a good time together! Guys' night out—eh, *compadrito?*"

"Sure," Héctor agreed, helplessly. It was the only thing he could think of to say.

In the casino, he won \$105 at blackjack and forced himself to quit while he was ahead. For some reason—the Poop-scooper from the Lion Habitat perhaps had something to do with it—Héctor did not feel justified in trusting his luck today. Also, he was anxious not to be away too long: AveMaría and Contracepción by now would be wanting a break from Dubya, in order to go shopping at the Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian. (Anticipating an SOS from his wife before now, he'd turned off the cell phone he wore on his belt.) There was just time, Héctor decided, for a stroll along the Strip and a quick lunch (reuben sandwich and a margarita) at New York, New York before he returned to the hotel room, where he found Contracepción minding Dubya while she watched *The Bachelor* on TV. "I can't believe *he* gave *her* the rose!" she was shrieking as her father let himself in. "*Papá*, where have you *been* all morning? *Mamá* went out two hours ago to play the slot machines, leaving me all by myself with Dubya, who's been such a *brat!* Nothing but lions, lions, lions—you'd think we were on a safari or something! *Please* can I go now, *Papá*? We're going home in only four days, and I haven't got to see or do *anything* I wanted yet in Vegas! I feel like it hasn't been any vacation for me at *all*, hardly! *Puh-lease, Papáito!*"

So Héctor spent yet another afternoon with Dubya at the Lion Habitat, keeping his eyes peeled the whole time for Juanito Villalobos. Nothing but trouble could come from associating with a *hombre* like that. It was Héctor's firm intention to



confront Villalobos and tell him face to face he preferred to spend the evening in the company of his wife and family. But the keeper must have had the afternoon off, or perhaps he was away poop-scooping behind the scenes somewhere. One way or another, Héctor went upstairs at five without having caught a glimpse of Juanito Villalobos.

That evening, the Villas ate an early supper at the International House of Pancakes. Back in the MGM, they held a family conclave to decide how the rest of the evening should be spent. To Héctor's disgruntlement, the hotel failed to offer childcare facilities, meaning Dubya had to go everywhere with the adults (when *they* were not going everywhere with *him*). Héctor was greatly relieved not to find a message waiting from Juanito Villalobos and was beginning to hope the keeper might fail to follow through with his offer of a drink. Contracepción was clamoring to be allowed to attend a Bon Jovi concert in the Grand Garden Arena, while AveMaría was keen on seeing David Copperfield at 7:30 at the Hollywood Theater, provided they allowed Dubya in with her. Héctor himself would have liked to take in a boxing match between Jesús Chavez and Marco Antonio Barrera farther down the Strip. When, however, he learned that tickets to hear Bon Jovi began at \$52 and David Copperfield cost a flat \$97, Héctor determined to deny himself the indulgence (\$450-\$475) and apply the money he'd made at blackjack that morning to subsidizing the girls' evening on the town. Indeed, the more he considered the matter, the more it seemed to him the responsible thing to return to the gaming tables that evening and replenish his depleted, if not quite bankrupt, pocketbook. This meant hiring a babysitter through the front desk, which would cost him big bucks. On the

credit side, though, it would free him up to *make* those bucks. It was a gamble, of course. But what was he here to do, in the first place, if *not* to gamble?

On learning she was going to be allowed to hear Bon Jovi after all, Contracepción threw her arms around her father and kissed him on both cheeks, Mexican style, squealing with delight at the prospect of getting to unveil her new belly-button ring at a Vegas rock concert. AveMaría, stricken with guilt at the thought of abandoning her baby to a stranger for the evening, was more subdued in her enthusiasm. ("At least, she's sure to be *Méjicana*," she consoled herself.) In the end, Héctor phoned the front desk and arranged the procurement of a babysitter at the rate of \$15 per hour (\$20 after 10 P.M.). Then, after instructing them to look for him at the blackjack tables in the casino after the shows let out, he left the women to primp and preen in the bathroom while he descended to the lobby, eager to make an immediate start in his quest for financial solvency. Walking out through the elevator doors, he collided frontally with Juanito Villalobos walking in.

"¡Ay, *compadrito*!" the Poop-scooper exclaimed. "¡*Tal coincidencia!* I was just on my way up to your room in search of you. You had not forgotten I have promised to buy you a drink tonight—no? You have eaten already I think? ¡*Bueno!* So have I, *hermano*. We can drink all the more now, without getting picked up by the *policía*, or the f-king *migra*—¡*salos cochinos!*"

Holding Héctor under the elbow in a familiar way, Juanito steered him into the casino and between the tables up to the bar, where the two men seated themselves on tall stools facing the long array of bottles and taps presided over by two strong-looking tawny blondes, alike enough to be sisters and with the bold predatory faces of a pair of exceptionally handsome lionesses. Juanito Villalobos pulled a leather trucker's wallet, attached by a chain to his hand-tooled belt, from a back pocket of his jeans and fingered out a few grimy dollar bills.

"Héctor!" he invited, in the grandiose manner of an *alcalde* bestowing upon an illustrious visitor the keys to his city, or a mafia don exhibiting his kingdom to a favored lieutenant, "I will treat you to anything you care to drink—beer, whiskey, tequila, anything! Please order freely, *compadrito*! You are a big man in America, after all—a success story! I feel honored just to share a drink with a *jefe* like you, *Señor Héctor Villa!*"

Héctor felt slightly sickened. He was trapped, unless he had the stomach to refuse the man's generosity, however unwanted—and he didn't have it, he knew. All he could do, in the circumstances, was accept the offer of a drink with as good grace as he could muster, leave Villalobos with a reciprocal round, and find himself a place at the blackjack tables as quickly as possible. It was all very embarrassing and annoying, *ciertamente*. Also, it was the civilized thing to do.

For a sub-keeper, or maintenance man, at what was basically an upscale zoo, Juanito Villalobos was a sharp dresser, Héctor thought, taking in the polished yellow cowboy boots and pressed powder-blue pants, the black-and-white checked shirt with its spread collar, and the Indian silver necklace weighing heavy on his brown collarbone. He was tempted to order Napoleon brandy but compromised with Crown Royal instead. Villalobos nodded approvingly.

"You know how to live, *compadrito*—anyone can see that," he said. "So, Héctor! What you do for a living when you ain't fighting the *gringos* or getting yourself elected to something?"

When Héctor explained that he owned a computer-repair company, Villalobos looked attentive.

"How many men you got working for you?" he wanted to know.

"Just me. My wife helps with the billing some."

"Maybe you need a bodyguard, next time you run for office?"

"I'm through with politics. I thought I mentioned that."

Juanito Villalobos nodded, as if to say he'd heard that one before. "That's what they all say. I'm going to go ahead and write down my address and phone number on a piece of paper, *hermano*," he added. "You think you can use me, just let me know. *Us mojados* owe it to each other to stick together, up here in El Norte. I don't want to spend the rest of my life picking up behind the ass-end of a bunch of mangy, flea-bitten cats. Can you believe they f-king *shampoo* the goddamn things every single day?"

Héctor, impatient as he was to get down to work at the tables, called for a second round of drinks so as to leave the bill even-steven. When they came, Villalobos asked the nearest lioness to bring the cigar box, from which he carefully selected two thick and long Bances.

"One for me, one for you," he explained, laying one of the cigars on the

wood beside Héctor's balloon glass. Then he beckoned the girl closer and leaned across the bar to whisper something in her ear. She nodded distantly and went away again.

"This is a night to celebrate," Juanito Villalobos proposed, holding a plated lighter under the end of Héctor's cigar. "Tonight, I have found my *compinche* for life."

Héctor had smoked half his cigar already before he remembered cigar smoke gave him a headache. The smoke, combining with two stiff Crown Royals, made a vague space where his brain ought to be—especially tonight, when solvency would depend upon its utmost strength and capacity. In his distraction, he scarcely noticed when a pair of young women approached the bar and took a stool on either side of himself and the Poop-scooper. Both girls had on hip-huggers exposing their beringed navels, flimsy camisoles, and so much makeup they looked like patrons who'd forgotten to remove their facials before leaving the spa.

"Hi," the girl next to Héctor said. Startled, he turned sideways in time to see her take a sip of his drink. "I have a thing for Crown Royal guys," the girl said. "But I always drink Napoleon, myself," she added to the hovering lioness.

Héctor was too astounded to speak. On his opposite side, Juanito Villalobos and the other girl were already getting to know each other while her drink was being poured.

"You don't need to be shy just because you're Mexican," his girl said. "I wasn't raised to be prejudiced." As if to prove it, she hitched herself onto his lap, threw one arm about his neck, and reached with her free hand to accept her balloon from the lioness.

A piercing shriek from across the room was sufficient to penetrate Héctor's mind, even in its present condition of shock and befuddlement. Looking around the girl in his lap, he saw AveMaría plunging toward them across the room, her capacious handbag brandished above her head. His first thought was that the thing was impossible; David Copperfield could hardly even have started yet. He had no other thought beyond that one, and no memory later of bucking the girl off and dashing headlong between the card tables and the astounded dealers in the direction of the nearest EXIT sign. The house police caught up only a few yards from the doors, bringing him down with a flying tackle on the carpeted floor among the discarded bar tickets and cigarette butts. 

The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Seasons and Travels in the New Old West

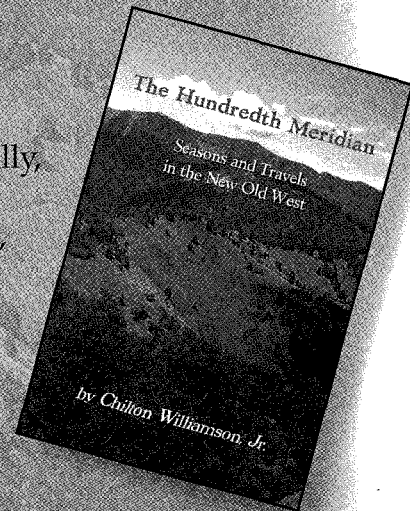
What the Old West had that the New West increasingly lacks are, finally, reality and dignity—the reality of what is basic to human experience, the dignity that comes from acceptance of the physical trials, dangers, hardships, and experience which accompany that reality.

—From the Foreword

Praise for earlier work by Chilton Williamson, Jr.:

"Williamson proves himself a stylish writer with a deft touch in creating three-dimensional characters, and in bringing the bleak beauty of the Wyoming outback to vivid life."—Don Campbell, *Los Angeles Times*

"A novel of wit, intelligence, and high style, enriched with many fresh observations of the eroding American West."—Edward Abbey on *Desert Light*.



The Hundredth Meridian Order Form (please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

Softcover Price \$22.95
(\$19.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling each)

X Quantity _____

Total _____

Please mail form (with payment) to:
Chronicles/Products
P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054

Name _____ HUND

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ Check or money order enclosed

☐ Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

HUND

or, to order toll-free,
call 1-800-397-8160

Back in Print!

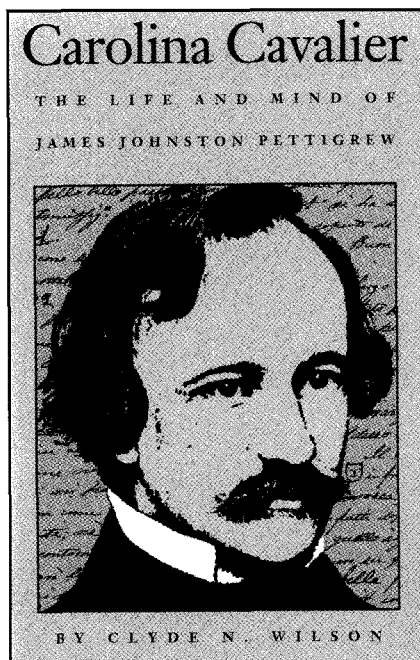
Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew
by Clyde Wilson

Chronicles Press is proud to announce the republication of Dr. Wilson's highly sought-after biography of one of the South's most brilliant and remarkable sons.

"A strong, forthright book."
—W.J. Cooper, Jr.,
Civil War History

"Transcending even first-rate biography, *Carolina Cavalier* returns us to the fine old tradition of history as moral narrative."
—Steven Davis,
The Courier

"Magisterial intellectual history."
—M.E. Bradford,
National Review



"Wilson is, in short, an exemplary historian who, in this book, displays his formidable talent."
—Eugene Genovese,
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture

"In Wilson's sensitive hands *Carolina Cavalier* is biography raised to an art form."
—Michael J. Bonafield,
Charleston News and Courier

"No study of a commanding general of either side better conveys the personal, social, cultural, and religious qualities of its subject; of no Confederate general is there in this regard a superior one-volume study."

—David Bovenizer, *Southern Partisan*

Carolina Cavalier Order Form (please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

Paperback Price \$27.95

CARO

(\$24.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling each) X Quantity _____ = Total _____

Name _____

☐

Check or money order enclosed

Address _____

☐

Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

City/State/Zip _____

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Please mail form (with payment) to: Chronicles/Products, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054
or, to order toll-free, call 1-800-397-8160

CARO

The Rockford Institute and
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
 present

The 17th Annual Meeting of the John Randolph Club



"Global Problems, Local Solutions"

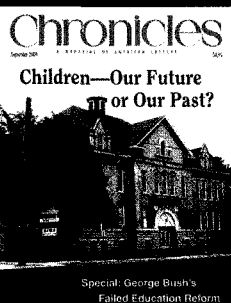
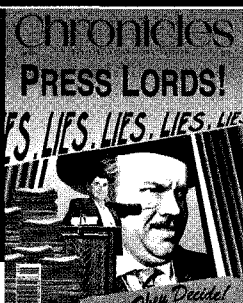
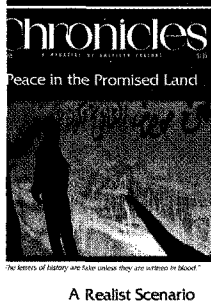
October 13-14, 2006

in *Chronicles'* hometown,
 Rockford, Illinois

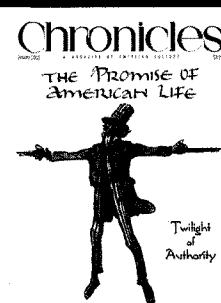
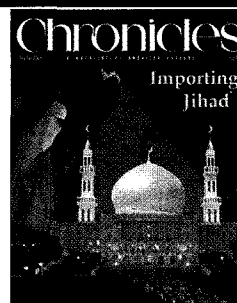
Join *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming, along with Christopher Check, David Hartman, Roger McGrath, Stephen B. Presser, Srdja Trifkovic, Chilton Williamson, Jr., Aaron D. Wolf, and others at Rockford's premier hotel, Cliffbreakers River Suites, for a weekend of lively, candid, and intelligent discussion on local solutions to immigration, abortion, *jihad*, the decline of manufacturing, and other cultural and political ills afflicting America.

A limited number of rooms are available at Cliffbreakers (700 West Riverside Blvd., Rockford) at a special rate of \$79.00, single or double occupancy, continental breakfast included. Please call (815) 282-3033 by October 1 and mention the John Randolph Club.

Sign up today and join the "Beer-Hall Conservatives" as we celebrate
Chronicles' 30th birthday!



Chronicles
 30
 years



Special black-tie banquet on Saturday night, featuring a debate on
 "Chronicles and the Limits of Dissent in Times of National Crisis."

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE/FAX _____

EMAIL _____

☐ Please add my address to the Institute's e-mail list

Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ to the Rockford Institute's Scholarship Fund so that worthy young students can attend this important event.

Make checks payable to the John Randolph Club. Mail with completed form to: JRC, The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103

or pay by credit card by calling Cindy Link at (800) 383-0680.

For student rates, panels-only rates, or other information, contact Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811.

N.B.: All prices increase \$30.00 after September 15, 2006

JOHN RANDOLPH CLUB FULL REGISTRATION
 (FRIDAY EVENING OPENING ADDRESS AND RECEPTION, SATURDAY PANELS,
 SATURDAY LUNCH, SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET AND PROGRAM)

MEMBER _____ @ \$225.00 EA = \$_____

NON-MEMBER _____ @ \$250.00 EA = \$_____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$_____

Open to all *Chronicles* subscribers!